

The Treasure Chest

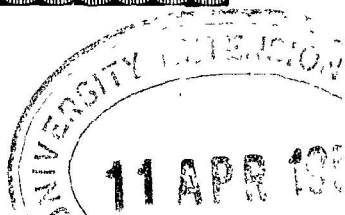
The Treasure Chest

AN ANTHOLOGY
OF CONTEMPLATIVE PROSE

Edited by
J. DONALD ADAMS



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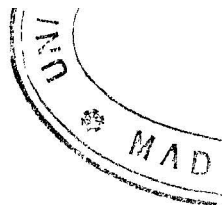
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IN GRATEFUL AND
LOVING REMEMBRANCE OF
MARY LOUISE BARRON ADAMS
WHO WOULD
HAVE LIKED THE IDEA

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INTRODUCTION

AMONG ALL the forms of picking other men's brains, the making of anthologies is probably the most harmless. Indeed, its only evil effect is likely to be the irritation it causes in those whose personal preferences are offended by the anthologist. Then too, it provides the innocent editor with opportunities to disarm his critics which are much wider than those open to the authors of original works. He can always say, and very frequently does, "The pieces gathered here reflect, after all, but my own taste; I make no pretense of finality." Thus, unless his choices are incredibly bad, or his excuses for making another anthology at all are extraordinarily flimsy, those who pass upon his work are reduced to fretfully exclaiming, "This is all very well, but why, oh why didn't Mr. Higginbotham include thus and so, and how could he have been so fatuous as to find room for this or that piece of stale mediocrity?"

Every anthologist's first concern is to justify himself even before the pudding is eaten. Nobody offers a book more self-consciously than he, because nine times out of ten he will believe more passionately in his own brain-child than he will in these children of his adoption. Sometimes, to ease his squirming conscience, he will slyly transfer the onus to somebody else, and say blandly, "It was suggested to me," etc., or pretend that it all began merely as a means of amusing himself, and since it had brought him pleas-

ure, there might possibly be others—you know, the philanthropic approach.

Occasionally, if he is very good at self-deception, he is able to convince himself that his anthology is something altogether new; that although the materials out of which he has woven his magic carpet are as old as the language, he has contrived a pattern that owes little or nothing to anybody. This is the temporarily delightful state in which the editor of the present compilation finds himself. He has succeeded in pulling the wool sufficiently over his own eyes to believe that he has found a new idea for a prose anthology.

So far as he is able, at this stage of his possible hallucination, to determine the motives which brought this book into being, they are three in number, aside from the one without which Dr. Johnson felt that no books would ever be written by any writer with a mental age of more than eight. The first sprang from a personal delight in reflective writing, the kind of writing that sets up fermentation, mild or violent, as the case may be, in the reader's mind. The second was a disposition to quarrel with the more or less generally accepted axiom among prose anthologists, that prose is handled unjustly when it is cut up into small pieces. Editors are forever protesting that they could not use a passage from so-and-so because to tear it from its context would be to misrepresent the author and his style. Prose, they are fond of maintaining, needs room to turn around in, in order that

its native structure may be revealed. Certainly this is true of narrative, or of devious and carefully devised argument, but it does not seem to me to apply to prose of a contemplative kind. My third motive was the sincere belief that there are enough readers who would welcome a book intended to bring together some of the best bits of thought-provoking prose that I had encountered through long years of reading.

I thought this might particularly be so at this particular time because the sort of writing of which this book is composed cannot be said to flourish in our period. One could make an enormous anthology out of such writing by confining oneself to the seventeenth, eighteenth or nineteenth century alone; our own temper is otherwise; we go in for facts, or for swift narrative, or for argument, or for analysis. Yet we have a craving, perhaps because our swiftly-moving lives have deprived us of adequate opportunity, for reflection and its fruits, provided we can obtain it in concentrated form, like our vitamins.

For two years, on the page which I have been conducting in *The New York Times Book Review*, I have run a column of brief prose selections from books old and new, whose heading provided the title for this anthology. Some of the passages which have appeared there are included here, though they comprise but a small proportion of the book. In making the selections for the column from week to week, I was struck by the scarcity, among the current books, of passages which met the requirements I had in

mind: that they should be able to stand by themselves, independent of their context, that they should irritate or stimulate the mind or fire the imagination, and last, if they said what they had to say in prose of a distinguished quality, so much the better, but I did not make the third feature an imperative one. In other words, I was not looking for "purple passages," though some which would answer that description (and one about which I think it is too easy to be condescending) will be found in these pages.

Contemporary writers like Santayana, or the late Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, or E. B. White (whom I group together merely because they possess in common the reflective cast of mind), are the exceptions among our writers. A goodly proportion of the pieces in this volume, it will be observed, are the work of men who were primarily essayists, which is another way of saying that they were informal philosophers. Until very recently, as everybody knows, the essay had fallen upon evil times, and men whose gifts were primarily those of the born essayist, like Aldous Huxley, chose for the most part to write in the form of fiction. There are signs here and there, that the essay, sometimes in a slightly disguised form, is finding its way back to the favor it once enjoyed, and I have a suspicion that our writing during the post-war years, unless we are swallowed up in a vortex of pyramiding crises, will assume a more reflective character than was customary during the period between the wars.

This would be only natural because we have

reached the stage where we *must* pause, or at least slow down, to assimilate and digest the tremendous flow of facts and theories, the welter of ideologies and half-baked opinions, that have been thrust at us in unending succession for the past quarter of a century. We have been living like men who are striving to keep a small boat afloat in a heavy sea; one after another the waves have been mounting before us, in such rapid and uninterrupted succession that there has not been time or opportunity to relax, to look about and see where we are. We are smothered under facts, and we need more than we need anything else to find a quiet space in our minds to take in their significance.

I have made no deliberate effort to give this book a proportionate pattern, and I must avail myself of the old alibi to the extent of saying that personal taste, as well as personal limitations, has often tipped the scale. You may find, for example, that I have used a disproportionate amount of Emerson, and in answer to that I can only say that I came to the reading of him early, that he played a great part in the formation of my mental attitudes, and that I owe him much. Many of the obvious lacks are due to an insufficient range in my reading. I have purposely, for instance, excluded the ancient classics because of the great gaps in my reading of them, well though I know how much wisdom may be found there. I hesitated before including any translations from European literature for much the same reason, and I am acutely aware of how glaring some of the omis-

sions are. I can only hope that there is enough first-rate stuff in this *pot-pourri* to make it both palatable and satisfying.

The casual inspector of the table of contents may be amazed at the absence of many distinguished names among our contemporaries. He would not feel that way, I venture to guess, if he were to take the trouble, let us say, to run through the work of Sinclair Lewis, of John Dos Passos, or half a dozen others of equal reputation or actual performance, looking for the kind of nuggets that I have tried to choose for this book. They simply are not there. The omission of such writers does not indicate that I think the less of them as writers; merely that their contribution to the literature of our time has been of another kind. The novelists, to be sure, of whatever period, are scantily represented here, though it would be possible, in the English novel of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries especially, to salvage a fair number of contemplative passages, for the novelist at that time still felt at liberty to introduce asides which were prompted by the situations in which his characters were involved. Our own period has aimed at a degree of detachment which, while it may be theoretically and artistically desirable, is practically impossible, for the novelist is not yet born who has not in some measure revealed himself in what he has written. We in this country should know, who have seen the most patent unburdenings of autobiography put forth in the name of fiction, for many years past. Even Ernest Hemingway, who

has deliberately excluded any semblance of an inner life in the depiction of his people, has told more about himself than he probably realizes.

I suppose the nearest approach to what I have attempted here was made by Logan Pearsall Smith in his "Treasury of English Aphorisms" and his "Treasury of English Prose." The first confined itself to the bounds indicated by its title, and contains nothing longer than a brief paragraph; commonly the selections are no longer than a sentence or two. The second admits pieces which I have excluded from this anthology. I have included nothing which had a purely narrative or descriptive interest; some of the selections are predominantly one or the other, but they were admitted because the narrative or the description brought the writer to some observation which seemed worth putting aside by itself.

One of the most difficult things I had to do was to exclude the pen-portraits of Carlyle. When the anthology was first conceived, I had intended to use several of them—the most vivid evocations of men and women through the medium of words that have ever been penned, but in the last analysis they seemed to be solely the indulgence of a personal taste and enthusiasm which did not fall within the bounds I had set for myself, and so they are absent from this book. Like so much else that might have been included, they may find a place if the occasion should arise to amplify what I have already done.

J. DONALD ADAMS

New York City, Bastille Day, 1945.

The Treasure Chest

Let Us Enjoy

OUR LIFE is short and tedious, and in the death of a man there is no remedy; neither was there any man known to have returned from the grave. For we are born at all adventure, and we shall be hereafter as though we had never been; for the breath in our nostrils is as smoke, and a little spark in the moving of our heart, which being extinguished, our body shall be turned into ashes, and our spirit shall vanish as the soft air, and our name shall be forgotten in time, and no man shall have our works in remembrance, and our life shall pass away as the trace of a cloud, and shall be dispersed as a mist that is driven away with the beams of the sun, and overcome with the heat thereof. For our time is a very shadow that passeth away, and after our end there is no returning; for it is fast sealed, so that no man cometh again. Come on therefore, let us enjoy the good things that are present, and let us speedily use the creatures like as in youth. Let us fill ourselves with costly wine and ointments; and let no flower of the spring pass by us; let us crown ourselves with rosebuds before they be withered; let none of us go without his part of our voluptuousness, let us leave tokens of our joyfulness in every place; for this is our portion, and our lot is this.—*The Wisdom of Solomon*, ii, 1-9.

Charity

THOUGH I SPEAK with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as

also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity. —I *Corinthians* xiii.

BIBLE

Resurrection of the Dead

THERE IS one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. . . .

Behold, I shew you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?—I *Corinthians* xv, 41-43; 51-55.

Vanity of Vanities

THE WORDS of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose. The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again. All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.

Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us. There is no remembrance of former things; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after.—*Ecclesiastes* i, 1-11.

A Time to Every Purpose

TO EVERY THING there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.
—*Ecclesiastes* iii, 1-8.

All Things Come Alike

ALL THINGS come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath. This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead. For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion.

For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.

Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepeth thy works. Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun.—*Ecclesiastes ix, 2-9.*

Remember Now Thy Creator

REMEMBER NOW thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; while the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain: in the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened, and the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of musick shall be brought low; also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher; all is vanity. —*Ecclesiastes* xii, 1-8.

Job Curses His Day

AFTER THIS opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day. And Job spake, and said, Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived. Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it. Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it. As for that night, let darkness seize upon it; let it not be joined unto the days of the year, let it not come into the number of the months. Lo, let that night be solitary, let no joyful voice come therein. Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up their mourning. Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it look for light, but have none; neither let it see the dawning of the day: because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes.

Why died I not from the womb? Why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly? Why did the knees prevent me? Or why the breasts that I should suck? For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest, with kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves; or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver: or as an hidden untimely birth I had not been; as infants which never saw light.

There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master.

Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul; which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures; which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave?—*Job* iii, 1-22.

God's Challenge to Job

THEN THE LORD ANSWERED Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it, and brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?

Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring to know his place; that it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it? . . .

Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war? By what way is the light

parted, which scattereth the east wind upon the earth? . . .

Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? Canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth? Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee? Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are? . . .—*Job xxxviii, 1-13; 22-24; 31-35.*

The Place of Understanding

THERE IS a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen: the lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it. . . .

But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living. The depth saith, It is not in me: and the sea saith. It is not with me. It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. . . .

Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding? seeing it is hidden from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air. Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.

God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof. For he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven; to make the weight for the winds; and he weigheth the waters by measure. When he made a decree for rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder: then did he see it, and declare it; he prepared it, yea, and searched it out. And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.—*Job xxviii, 7-8; 12-15; 20-28.*

On Death

“**I HAVE CONSIDERED,**” said Solomon, “all the works that are under the Sun, and behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit:” but who believes it, till Death tells it to us? It was Death which, opening the conscience of Charles the Fifth, made him enjoin his son Philip to restore Navarre; and King Francis the First of France, to command that justice should be done upon the murderers of the Protestants in Merindol and Cabrières, which till then he neglected. It is therefore Death alone that can suddenly make man to know himself. He tells the proud and insolent that they are but abjects, and humbles them at the instant; makes them cry, complain, and repent, yea, even to hate their forepassed happiness. He takes the account of the rich, and proves him a beggar; a naked beggar, which hath interest in nothing but in the gravel that fills his mouth. He holds a glass before the eyes of the most beautiful, and makes them see therein their deformity and rottenness; and they acknowledge it.

O eloquent, just and mighty Death! whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded; what none hath dared, thou hast done; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised; thou hast drawn together all the far-stretched greatness, all the pride, cruelty, and ambition of man, and covered it all over with these two narrow words, *Hic jacet.*—*The History of the World*, Book V, chap. vi.

In Praise of English

THE ITALIAN is pleasant but without sinews, as too stilly fleeting water; the French delicate but over nice, as a woman scarce daring to open her lips for fear of marring her countenance; the Spanish majestic, but fulsome, running too much on the o, and terrible like the devil in a play; the Dutch manlike, but withal very harsh, as one ready at every word to pick a quarrel. Now we in borrowing from them give the strength of consonants to the Italian, the full sound of words to the French, the variety of terminations to the Spanish, and the mollifying of more vowels to the Dutch; and so, like bees, gather the honey of their good properties and leave the dregs to themselves. And thus, when substantialness combineth with delightfulness, fullness with fineness, seemliness with portliness, and courrantness with staidness, how can the language which consisteth of all these sound other than most full of sweetness?

Again, the long words that we borrow, being intermingled with the short of our own store, make up a perfect harmony, by culling from out which mixture (with judgement) you may frame your speech according to the matter you must work on, majestic, pleasant, delicate, or manly, more or less, in what sort you please.—*An Epistle on the Excellency of the English Tongue.*

Books

IT IS NOT POSSIBLE to have the true pictures or statues of Cyrus, Alexander, Caesar, no, nor of the kings or great personages of much later years; for the originals cannot last, and the copies but leese of the life and truth. But the images of men's wits and knowledges remain in books, exempted from the wrong of time, and capable of perpetual renovation. Neither are they fitly to be called images, because they generate still, and cast their seeds in the minds of others, provoking and causing infinite actions and opinions in succeeding ages: so that, if the invention of the ship was thought so noble, which carrieth riches and commodities from place to place, and consociateth the most remote regions in participation of their fruits, how much more are letters to be magnified, which, as ships, pass through the vast sea of time, and make ages so distant to participate of the wisdom, illuminations, and inventions the one of the other?—*Advancement of Learning*, Book I.

On Boldness

IT is a trivial grammar-school text, but yet worthy a wise man's consideration: question was asked of Demosthenes, what was the chief part of an orator? he answered, Action: what next?—Action: what next again?—Action: He said it that knew it best, and had by nature himself no advantage in that he commended. A strange thing, that that part of an orator which is but superficial, and rather the virtue of a player, should be placed so high above those other noble parts of invention, elocution, and the rest; nay almost alone, as if it were all in all. But the reason is plain. There is in human nature generally more of the fool than of the wise; and therefore those faculties by which the foolish part of men's minds is taken are most potent. Wonderful like is the case of boldness in civil business; what first?—boldness; what second and third?—boldness: and yet boldness is a child of ignorance and baseness, far inferior to other parts: but, nevertheless, it doth fascinate and bind hand and foot those that are either shallow in judgement or weak in courage, which are the greatest part; yea, and prevaieth with wise men at weak times. Therefore we see it hath done wonders in popular states, but with senates and princes less; and more ever upon the first entrance of bold persons into action than soon after; for boldness is an ill keeper of promise. Surely as there are mountebanks for the

natural body, so are there mountebanks for the politic body; men that undertake great “cures”, and perhaps have been lucky in two or three experiments, but want the grounds of science, and therefore cannot hold out. Nay, you shall see a bold fellow many times do Mahomet’s miracle. Mahomet made the people believe that he would call a hill to him, and from the top of it offer up his prayers for the observers of his law. The people assembled: Mahomet called the hill to come to him again and again; and when the hill stood still, he was never a whit abashed, but said, “If the hill will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet will go to the hill.”—*Essays*.

Of Delays

FORTUNE IS LIKE the market, where many times, if you can stay a little, the price will fall; and again, it is sometimes like Sibylla's offer, which at first offereth the commodity at full, then consumeth part and part, and still holdeth up the price; for occasion (as it is in the common verse) 'turneth a bald noddle after she hath presented her locks in front, and no hold taken'; or at least, turneth the handle of the bottle first to be received, and after the belly, which is hard to clasp. There is surely no greater wisdom than well to time the beginnings and onsets of things. Dangers are no more light, if they once seem light; and more dangers have deceived men than forced them; nay, it were better to meet some dangers half-way, though they come nothing near, than to keep too long a watch upon their approaches; for if a man watch too long, it is odds he will fall asleep. On the other side, to be deceived with too long shadows (as some have been when the moon was low, and shone on their enemies' back), and so to shoot off before the time; or to teach dangers to come on by over early buckling towards them, is another extreme. The ripeness or unripeness of the occasion (as we said) must ever be well weighed; and generally it is good to commit the beginnings of all great actions to Argus with his hundred eyes, and the ends to Briareus with his hundred hands; first to watch and

then to speed; for the helm of Pluto, which maketh the politic man go invisible, is secrecy in the council, and celerity in the execution; for when things are once come to the execution, there is no secrecy comparable to celerity, like the motion of a bullet in the air, which flieth so swift as it outruns the eye.—*Essays.*

Youth and Age

A MAN THAT is young in years may be old in hours, if he have lost no time; but that happeneth rarely. Generally, youth is like the first cogitations, not so wise as the second: for there is a youth in thoughts, as well as in ages; and yet the invention of young men is more lively than that of old, and imaginations stream into their minds better, and, as it were, more divinely. Natures that have much heat, and great and violent desires and perturbations, are not ripe for action till they have passed the meridian of their years: as it was with Julius Caesar and Septimius Severus; of the latter of whom it is said, *'Juventutem egit erroribus, imo furoribus plenam'*; and yet he was the ablest emperor, almost, of all the list; but reposed natures may do well in youth, as it is seen in Augustus Caesar, Cosmus duke of Florence, Gaston de Foix, and others. On the other side, heat and vivacity in age is an excellent composition for business. Young men are fitter to invent than to judge, fitter for execution than for counsel, and fitter for new projects than for settled business: for the experience of age, in things that fall within the compass of it, directeth them; but in new things abuseth them. The errors of young men are the ruin of business; but the errors of aged men amount but to this, that more might have been done, or sooner.—*Essays.*

Of Studies

READ NOT to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider. Some Books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; That is, some Books are to be read only in parts; others to be read but not curiously, and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some Books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments and the meaner sort of Books; else distilled books are like common distilled waters, flashy things. Reading maketh a full man; Conference a ready man; and Writing an exact man; and therefore, if a man write little he had need have a great memory; if he confer little he had need have a present wit; and if he read little he had need have much cunning, to seem to know that he doth not. Histories make man wise; Poets, witty; the Mathematicks, subtile; Natural Philosophy, deep; Moral, grave; Logick and Rhetorick, able to contend: *Abeunt studia in mores,—Essays,*

Before Agincourt

KING HENRY. For, though I speak it to you, I think the King is but a man, as I am. The violet smells to him as it doth to me; the element shows to him as it doth to me; all his senses have but human conditions: his ceremonies laid by, in his nakedness he appears but a man; and though his affections are higher mounted than ours, yet when they stoop, they stoop with the like wing. Therefore when he sees reason of fears, as we do, his fears, out of doubt, be of the same relish as ours are; yet, in reason, no man should possess him with any appearance of fear, lest he, by showing it, should dishearten his army....

Methinks I could not die anywhere so contented as in the King's company, his cause being just and his quarrel honourable. . . .

Will. But if the cause be not good, the King himself hath a heavy reckoning to make; when all those legs and arms and heads, chopped off in a battle, shall join together at the latter day, and cry all, "We died at such a place;" some swearing, some crying for a surgeon, some upon their wives left poor behind them, some upon the debts they owe, some upon their children rawly left. I am afeard there are few die well that die in a battle; for how can they charitably dispose of anything when blood is their argument? Now, if these men do not die well, it will be a black matter for the King that led them to it; whom to disobey were against all proportion of subjection.
—*Henry V*, iv, 1.

The Nature of Man

I HAVE OF LATE—but wherefore I know not—lost all my mirth, foregone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o’erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me; no, nor woman neither, though, by your smiling you seem to say so,—*Hamlet*, ii, 2.

Of Studies

EASE AND RELAXATION are profitable to all studies. The mind is like a bow, the stronger by being unbent. But the temper in spirits is all, when to command a man's wit, when to favour it. I have known a man vehement on both sides; that knew no mean, either to intermit his studies, or call upon them again. When he hath set himself to writing, he would join night to day; press upon himself without release, not minding it, till he fainted; and when he left off, resolve himself into all sports, and looseness again; that it was almost a despair to draw him to his book. But once got to it he grew stronger, and more earnest by the ease. His whole powers were renewed; he would work out of himself, what he desired; but with such excess, as his study could not be ruled; he knew not how to dispose his own abilities, or husband them: he was of that immoderate power against himself. Nor was he only a strong but an absolute speaker and writer; but his subtlety did not show itself; his judgment thought that a vice. For the ambush hurts more that is hid. He never forced his language, nor went out of the highway of speaking, but for some great necessity or apparent profit. For he denied figures to be invented for ornament, but for aid; and still thought it an extreme madness to bend or wrest that which ought to be right.—*Relaxation of Studies.*

Ill Fortune

ILL FORTUNE never crushed that man, whom good Fortune deceived not. I therefore have counselled my friends, never to trust to her fairer side, though she seemed to make peace with them; but to place all things she gave them so, as she might ask them again without their trouble; she might take them from them, not pull them: to keep always a distance between her, and themselves. He knows not his own strength that hath not met adversity. Heaven prepares good men with crosses; but no ill can happen to a good man. Contraries are not mixed. Yet that which happens to any man may to every man. But it is in his reason what he accounts it, and will make it.—*Fortune*.

The Dignity of Speech

CUSTOM is the most certain Mistress of Language, as the publicke stamp makes the current money. But we must not be too frequent with the mint, every day coining. Nor fetch words from the extreme and utmost ages; since the chief virtue of a style is perspicuity, and nothing so vicious in it, as to need an Interpreter. Words borrowed of Antiquity do lend a kind of Majesty to style, and are not without their delight sometimes. For they have the authority of years, and out of their intermission do win to themselves a kind of grace-like newness. But the eldest of the present, and newness of the past Language, is the best. For what was the ancient Language, which some men so dote upon, but the ancient Custom? Yet when I name Custom, I understand not the vulgar Custom: For that were a precept no less dangerous to Language, than life, if we should speak or live after the manners of the vulgar: But that I call Custom of speech, which is the consent of the Learned; as Custom of life, which is the consent of the good. Virgil was most loving of Antiquity; yet how rarely doth he insert *aquai* and *pictai*! Lucretius is scabrous and rough in these; he seeks 'hem: As some do Chaucerisms with us, which were better expung'd and banished. Some words are to be culled out for ornament and colour, as we gather flowers to straw houses, or make Garlands; but they are better

when they grow to our style; as in a Meadow, where though the mere grass and greenness delights; yet the variety of flowers doth heighten and beautify. Marry, we must not play, or riot too much with them, as in *Paranomasies*: Nor use too swelling or ill-sounding words; *Quae per salebras, altaque saxa cadunt*. It is true, there is no sound but shall find some Lovers, as the bitterest confections are grateful to some palats. Our composition must be more accurate in the beginning and end than in the midst; and in the end more than in the beginning; for through the midst the stream bears us. And this is attained by Custom more than care or diligence. We must express readily, and fully, not profusely. There is difference between a liberal and a prodigal hand. As it is a great point of Art, when our matter requires it, to enlarge, and veer out all sail; so to take it in and contract it is of no less praise when the Argument doth ask it. Either of them hath their fitness in the place. A good man always profits by his endeavour, by his help; yea, when he is absent; nay, when he is dead by his example and memory. So good Authors in their style: A strict and succinct style is that, where you can take away nothing without loss, and that loss to be manifest.—*Discoveries*.

Sleep

NATURAL MEN have conceived a twofold use of sleep; that it is a refreshing of the body in this life; that it is a preparing of the soul for the next; that it is a feast, and it is the grace at that feast; that it is our recreation, and cheers us, and it is our catechism, and instructs us; we lie down in a hope, that we shall rise the stronger; and we lie down in a knowledge, that we may rise no more. Sleep is an opiate, which gives us rest; but such an opiate, as perchance, being under it, we shall wake no more. But though natural men, who have induced secondary and figurative considerations, have found out this second, this emblematical use of sleep, that it should be a representation of death, God, who wrought and perfected his work, before nature began (for nature was but his apprentice, to learn in the first seven days, and now is his foreman, and works next under him) God, I say, intended sleep only for the refreshing of man by bodily rest, and not for a figure of death, for he intended not death itself then. But man having induced death upon himself God hath taken man's creature, death, into his hand, and mended it; and whereas it hath in itself a fearful form and aspect, so that man is afraid of his own creature, God presents it to him, in a familiar, in an assiduous, in an agreeable, and acceptable form, in sleep, that so when he awakes from sleep, and says to himself, shall

I be no otherwise when I am dead, than I was even now, when I was asleep, he may be ashamed of his waking dreams, and of his melancholy fancying out a horrid and an affrightful figure “of death which is so like sleep.” And then we need sleep to live out our threescore and ten years, so we need death, to live that life which we cannot outlive. And as death being our enemy, God allows us to defend ourselves against it (for we victual ourselves against death, twice every day, as often as we eat), so God having so sweetened death unto us, as he hath in sleep, we put ourselves into our enemy’s hands once every day, so far, as sleep is death: and sleep is as much death as meat is life.—*Sermons.*

The Bell

PERCHANCE ^{HEE} for whom this Bell tolls, may be so ill, as that he knowes not it tolls for him; And perchance I may thinke my selfe so much better than I am, as that they who are about mee, and see my state, may have caused it to toll for mee, and I know not that. The Church is Catholike, universall, so are all her Actions; All that she does, belongs to all. When she baptizes a child, that action concernes mee; for that child is thereby connected to that Head which is my Head too, and engrafted into that body, whereof I am a member. And when she buries a Man, that action concernes mee: . . . As therefore the Bell that rings to a Sermon, calls not upon the Preacher onely, but upon the Congregation to come; so this Bell calls us all: but how much more mee, who am brought so neere the doore by this sicknesse. . . . The Bell doth toll for him that thinkes it doth; and though it intermit againe, yet from that minute, that that occasion wrought upon him, hee is united to God. Who casts not up his Eie to the Sunne when it rises? but who takes off his Eie from a Comet when that breakes out? Who bends not his eare to any bell, which upon any occasion rings? but who can remove it from that bell, which is passing a peece of himselfe out of this world? No man is an Iland, intire of it selfe; every man is a peece of the Continent, a part of the maine; if a Clod bee washed away by the

Sea, Europe is the lesse, as well as if a Promontorie were, as well as if a Mannor of thy friends or of thine owne were; any mans death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankinde; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee.
—*Devotions upon Emergent Occasions.*

JOHN DONNE

Equality in Death

IT COMES EQUALLY to us all, and makes us all equal when it comes. The ashes of an Oak in the Chimney are no Epitaph of that Oak to tell me how high or large that was; it tells me not what flocks it sheltered while it stood, nor what men it hurt when it fell. The dust of great persons' graves is speechless too, it says nothing. It distinguishes nothing: as soon as the dust of a wretch whom thou wouldest not, as of a Prince thou couldest not look upon, will trouble thine eyes, if the wind blows it thither; and when a whirlwind hath blown the dust of the Churchyard into the Church, and the man sweeps out the dust of the Church into the Churchyard, who will undertake to sift those dusts again, and to pronounce, This is the Patrician, this is the noble flower, and this the yeomanly, this the Plebeian bran.—
Sermons.

The Discontented Man

A DISCONTENTED MAN is one that is fallen out with the world, and will be revenged on himself. Fortune has denied him in something, and he now takes pet, and will be miserable in spite. The root of his disease is a self-humouring pride, and an accustomed tenderness, not to be crossed in his fancy: and the occasions commonly one of these three, a hard father, a peevish wench, or his ambition thwarted. He considered not the nature of the world till he felt it, and all blows fall on him heavier, because they light not first on his expectation. He has now forgone all but his pride, and is yet vainglorious in the ostentation of his melancholy. His composure of himself is a studied carelessness with his arms across and a neglected hanging of his head and cloak, and he is as great an enemy to an hatband as Fortune. He quarrels at the time and upstarts, and sighs at the neglect of men of parts, that is, such as himself. His life is a perpetual satire, and he is still girding the age's vanity, when this very anger shows he too much esteems it. He is much displeased to see men merry, and wonders what they can find to laugh at. He never draws his own lips higher than a smile, and frowns wrinkle him before forty. He at the last falls into that deadly melancholy to be a bitter hater of men, and is the most apt companion for any mischief. He is the spark that kindles the commonwealth and

the bellows himself to blow it; and if he turn anything, it is commonly one of these, either friar, traitor, or madman.—*A Discontented Man.*

A Child

IS A MAN in a small letter, yet the best copy of Adam before he tasted of Eve, or the Apple; and he is happy whose small practice in the world can only write this character. He is Nature's fresh picture newly drawn in oil, which time and much handling dims and defaces. His soul is yet a white paper un-scribbled with observations of the world, wherewith at length it becomes a blurred note book. He is purely happy, because he knows no evil, nor hath made means by sin to be acquainted with misery. He arrives not at the mischief of being wise, nor endures evils to come by foreseeing them. He kisses and loves all, and when the smart of the rod is past, smiles on his beater. Nature and his parents alike dandle him, and tice him on with a bait of sugar to a draught of worm wood. He plays yet, like a young prentice the first day, and is not come to his task of melancholy. His hardest labour is his tongue, as if he were loath to use so deceitful an organ; and he is best company with it when he can but prattle. We laugh at his foolish sports, but his game is our earnest; and his drums, rattles and hobby horses but the emblems and mockings of man's business. His father hath writ him as his own little story, wherein he reads those days of his life that he cannot remember; and sighs to see what innocence he has outlived. The elder he grows he is a stair lower from God; and like his first

father much worse in his breeches. He is the christian's example and the old man's relapse: the one imitates his pureness, and the other falls into his simplicity. Could he put off his body with his little coat, he had got eternity without a burthen, and exchanged but one heaven for another,—*Micro-Cosmographie*.

The Nature of Dreams

DREAMS ARE NOTABLE MEANS of discovering our own inclinations. The wise man learns to know himself as well by the night's black mantle, as the searching beams of day. In sleep, we have the naked and natural thoughts of our souls: outward objects interpose not, either to shuffle in occasional cogitations, or hale out the included fancy. The mind is then shut up in the Borough of the body; none of the Cinque Ports of the Isle of Man are then open, to in-let any strange disturbers. Surely, how we fall to vice, or rise to virtue, we may by observation find in our dreams. It was the wise Zeno that said, he could collect a man by his dreams. For then the soul, stated in a deep repose, bewrayed her true affections: which, in the busy day, she would either not show, or not note. It was a custom among the Indians, when their kings went to their sleep, to pray with piping acclamations, that they might have happy dreams; and withal consult well for their subjects' benefit; as if the night had been a time, wherein they might grow good and wise. And certainly, the wise man is the wiser for his sleeping, if he can order well in the day, what the eyeless night presenteth him. Every dream is not to be counted of: nor yet are all to be cast away with contempt. I would neither be a Stoic, superstitious in all; nor yet an Epicure, considerate of none. If the physician may by them judge of the disease of the body, I see

not but the divine may do so, concerning the soul. I doubt not but the genius of the soul is waking, and motive even in the “fastest closures of the imprisoning eyelids.” But to presage from these thoughts of sleep, is a wisdom that I would not reach to. The best use we can make of dreams, is observation: and by that, our own correction, or encouragement. For ’tis not doubtable, but that the mind is working, in the dullest depth of sleep.—*Of Dreams.*

The Course of Time

DARKNESS AND LIGHT divide the course of time, and oblivion shares with memory a great part even of our living beings; we slightly remember our felicities, and the smartest strokes of affliction leave but short smart upon us. Sense endureth no extremities, and sorrows destroy us or themselves. To weep into stones are fables. Afflictions induce callosities; miseries are slippery, or fall like snow upon us, which notwithstanding is no unhappy stupidity. To be ignorant of evils to come, and forgetful of evils past, is a merciful provision in nature, whereby we digest the mixture of our few and evil days, and, our delivered senses not relapsing into cutting remembrances, our sorrows are not kept raw by the edge of repetitions. A great part of antiquity contented their hopes of subsistency with a transmigration of their soul,—a good way to continue their memories, while, having the advantage of plural successions, they could not but act something remarkable in such variety of beings, and enjoying the fame of their passed selves, make accumulation of glory unto their last durations. Others, rather than be lost in the uncomfortable night of nothing, were content to recede into the common being, and make one particle of the public soul of all things, which was no more than to return into their unknown and divine original again. Egyptian ingenuity was more unsatisfied, contriving their bodies in

sweet consistencies, to attend the return of “their souls.” But all was vanity, feeding the wind, and folly. The Egyptian mummies, which Cambyses or time hath spared, avarice now consumeth. Mummy is become merchandise, Mizraim cures wounds, and Pharaoh is sold for balsams.—*Of Ambition and Fame.*

Books

FOR BOOKS are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul whose progeny they are; nay, they do preserve as in a vial the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. I know they are as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous dragons' teeth; and being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men. And yet, on the other hand, unless wariness be used, as good almost kill a man as kill a good book: who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book, kills Reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were, in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the earth; but a good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life. 'Tis true, no age can restore a life, whereof, perhaps, there is no great loss; and revolutions of ages do not oft recover the loss of a rejected truth, for the want of which whole nations fare the worse. We should be wary, therefore, what persecution we raise against the living labours of public men, how we spill that seasoned life of man, preserved and stored up in books; since we see a kind of homicide may be thus committed, sometimes a martyrdom; and if it extend to the whole impression, a kind of massacre, whereof the execution ends not in the slaying of an elemental life, but

strikes at that ethereal and fifth essence, the breath of Reason itself; slays an immortality rather than a life.—*Areopagitica*.

JOHN MILTON

True Virtue

HE THAT CAN apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true warfaring Christian. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and seeks her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat. Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world, we bring impurity much rather; that which purifies us is trial, and trial is by what is contrary. That virtue therefore which is but a youngling in the contemplation of evil, and knows not the utmost that vice promises to her followers, and rejects it, is but a blank virtue, not a pure; her whiteness is but an excremental whiteness; which was the reason why our sage and serious poet Spenser (whom I dare be known to think a better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas), describing true temperance under the person of Guion, brings him in with his palmer through the cave of Mammon, and the bower of earthly bliss, that he might see and know, and yet abstain.—*Areopagitica*.

Of Belief

EVERY ONE TRUSTS to somewhat. As for honour and esteem and popularity, they are airy, vain things; but riches seem a more solid work and fence, yet they are but a tower in conceit, not really: 'The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as a high wall in his own conceit; but the name of the Lord is a strong tower indeed.' This is the thing that all seek, some fence and fixing; and here it is. We call you not to vexation and turmoil, but *from* it, and, as St. Paul said, 'Whom ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you.' Ye blindly and fruitlessly seek after the show and shadow instead of the substance. The true aiming at this fixedness of mind will secure that, though they that aim fall short, yet by the way they will light on very pretty things that have some virtue in them, as they that seek the philosopher's stone. But the believer hath the thing, the secret itself of tranquility and joy, and this turns all into gold, even iron chains into a crown of gold. 'While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.'

This is the blessed and safe estate of believers. Who can think they have a sad, heavy life? Oh! it is the only lightsome, sweet, cheerful condition in the world! The rest of men are poor, rolling, unstayed things, every report shaking them 'as the leaves of trees are shaken with the wind,' yea, lighter than these, they are as the 'chaff that the wind drives to

and fro' at its pleasure. Would men but reflect and look in upon their own hearts, it is a wonder what vain childish things the most would find there, glad and sorry at things as light as the toys of children, at which they laugh and cry in a breath. How easily is the heart puffed up with a thing or word that pleaseth us, bladder-like, swelled with a little air, and it shrinks in again in discouragement and fear upon the touch of a needle point, which gives that air some vent.—*Sermons.*

Enjoyment

I CONSIDER that he that is the greatest possessor in the world, enjoys its best and most noble parts, and those which are of most excellent perfection, but in common with the inferior persons, and the most despicable of his kingdom. Can the greatest prince enclose the sun, and set one little star in his cabinet for his own use, or secure for himself the gentle and benign influence of any one constellation? Are not his subjects' fields bedewed with the same showers that water his gardens of pleasure? . . .

The poorest artisan of Rome, walking in Caesar's gardens, had the same pleasures which they ministered to their Lord: and although it may be, he was put to gather fruits to eat from another place, yet his other senses were delighted equally with Caesar's: the birds made him as good music, the flowers gave him as sweet smells; he there sucked as good air, and delighted in the beauty and order of the place, for the same reason and upon the same perception as the prince himself, save only that Caesar paid for all that pleasure vast sums of money, the blood and treasure of a province, which the poor man had for nothing.

Suppose a man lord of all the whole world (for still we are but in supposition), yet since everything is received, not according to its own greatness and worth, but according to the capacity of the receiver,

it signifies very little as to our content, or to the riches of our possession. . . . He to whom the world can be given to any purpose greater than a private estate can minister, must have new capacities created in him: he needs the understanding of an angel to take the accounts of his estate; he had need have a stomach like fire or the grave, for else he can eat no more than one of his healthful subjects: and unless he hath an eye like the sun, and a motion like that of a thought, and a bulk as big as one of the orbs of heaven, the pleasures of his eye can be no greater than to behold the beauty of a little prospect from a hill, or to look upon the heap of gold packed up in a little room, or to dote upon a cabinet of jewels—better than which there is no man that sees at all but sees every day. For not to name the beauties and sparkling diamonds of heaven, a man's or a woman's or a hawk's eye is more beauteous and excellent than all the jewels of his crown.—*Sermon, The Foolish Exchange,*

The Nature of Prayer

PRAYER IS THE PEACE of our spirit, the stillness of our thoughts, the evenness of recollection, the seat of meditation, the rest of our cares, and the calm of our tempest; prayer is the issue of a quiet mind, of untroubled thoughts, it is the daughter of charity and the sister of meekness; and he that prays to God with an angry, that is with a troubled and discomposed spirit, is like him that retires into a battle to meditate, and sets up his closet in the outquarters of an army, and chooses a frontier-garrison to be wise in. Anger is a perfect alienation of the mind from prayer, and therefore is contrary to that attention which presents our prayers in a right line to God. For so have I seen a lark rising from his bed of grass, and soaring upwards, singing as he rises, and hopes to get to heaven, and climb above the clouds; but the poor bird was beaten back with the loud sighings of an eastern wind, and his motion made irregular and unconstant, descending more at every breath of the tempest than it could recover by the libration and frequent weighing of his wings; till the little creature was forced to sit down and pant, and stay till the storm was over; and then it made a prosperous flight, and did rise and sing, as if it had learned music and motion from an angel as he passed sometimes through the air about his ministries here below.—*Sermon, The Return of Prayers.*

Of Curiosity

EVERY MAN hath in his own life sins enough, in his own mind trouble enough, in his own fortune evils enough, and in performance of his offices failings more than enough to entertain his own inquiry: so that curiosity after the affairs of others cannot be without envy and an evil mind. What is it to me if my neighbour's grandfather were a Syrian, or his grandmother illegitimate, or that another is indebted five thousand pounds, or whether his wife be expensive? But commonly curious persons, or (as the Apostle's phrase is) 'busy-bodies', are not solicitous or inquisitive into the beauty and order of a well-governed family, or after the virtues of an excellent person; but if there be any thing for which men keep locks and bars and porters, things that blush to see the light, and either are shameful in manners, or private in nature, these things are their care and their business. But if great things will satisfy our inquiry, the course of the sun and moon, the spots in their faces, the firmament of heaven and the supposed orbs, the ebbing and flowing of the sea, are work enough for us: or, if this be not, let him tell me whether the number of the stars be even or odd, and when they began to be so; since some ages have discovered new stars which the former knew not, but might have seen if they had been where now they are fixed. If these be too troublesome, search lower,

and tell me why this turf this year brings forth a daisy, and the next year a plantain; why the apple bears his seed in his heart, and wheat bears it in his head: let him tell why a graft, taking nourishment from a crab-stock, shall have a fruit more noble than its nurse and parent: let him say why the best of oil is at the top, the best of wine in the middle, and the best of honey at the bottom, otherwise than it is in some liquors that are thinner, and in some that are thicker. But these things are not such as please busy-bodies; they must feed upon tragedies, and stories of misfortunes and crimes: and yet tell them ancient stories of the ravishment of chaste maidens, or the debauchment of nations, or the extreme poverty of learned persons, or the persecutions of the old saints, or the changes of government, and sad accidents happening in royal families amongst the Arsacidae, the Caesars, the Ptolemies, these were enough to scratch the itch of knowing sad stories: but unless you tell them something sad and new, something that is done within the bounds of their own knowledge or relation, it seems tedious and unsatisfying; which shows plainly it is an evil spirit: envy and idleness married together, and begot curiosity.—*Holy Living.*

Of Covetousness

RICHES ARE USELESS and unprofitable; for beyond our needs and conveniences nature knows no use of riches: and they say that the princes of Italy, when they sup alone, eat out of a single dish, and drink in a plain glass, and the wife eats without purple: 'for nothing is more frugal than the back and belly,' if they be used as they should: but when they would entertain the eyes of strangers, when they are vain and would make a noise, then riches come forth to set forth the spectacle, and furnish out 'the comedy of wealth, of vanity'. No man can with all the wealth in the world buy so much skill as to be a good lutenist; he must go the same way that poor people do, he must learn and take pains: much less can he buy constancy, or chastity, or courage; nay, not so much as the contempt of riches: and by possessing more than we need, we cannot obtain so much power over our souls as not to require more. And certainly riches must deliver me from no evil, if the possession of them cannot take away the longing for them. If any man be thirsty, drink cools him; if he be hungry, eating meat satisfies him: and when a man is cold, and calls for a warm cloak, he is pleased if you give it him; but you trouble him if you load him with six or eight cloaks. Nature rests and sits still when she hath her portion; but that which exceeds it is a trouble and a burthen: and therefore in true philosophy, no man

is rich but he that is poor, according to the common account: for when God hath satisfied those needs which He made, that is, all that is natural, whatsoever is beyond it is thirst and a disease, and unless it be sent back again in charity or religion, can serve no end but vice or vanity. It can increase the appetite, to represent the man poorer, and full of a new and artificial, unnatural need; but it never satisfies the need it makes, or makes the man richer. 'No wealth can satisfy the covetous desire of wealth.'—*Holy Living.*

Dangers of An Honest Man

DO YE WONDER that virtuous man should love to be alone? It is hard for him to be otherwise; he is so, when he is among ten thousand: neither is the solitude so uncomfortable to be alone without any other creature, as it is to be alone in the midst of wild beasts. Man is to man all kind of beasts; a fawning dog, a roaring lion, a thieving fox, a robbing wolf, a dissembling crocodile, a treacherous decoy, and a rapacious vulture. The civilest, methinks, of all nations, are those whom we account the most barbarous; there is some moderation and good nature in the Toupinambaltians, who eat no men but their enemies, whilst we learned and polite and Christian Europeans, like so many pikes and sharks, prey upon everything that we can swallow. It is the great boast of eloquence and philosophy, that they first congregated men dispersed, united them into societies, and built up the houses and the walls of cities. I wish they could unravel all they had woven; that we might have our woods and our innocence again, instead of our castles and our policies. They have assembled many thousands of scattered people into one body: 'tis true, they have done so; they have brought them together into cities to cozen, and into armies to murder, one another: they found them hunters and fishers of wild creatures, they have made them hunters and fishers of their brethren: they boast to have re-

duced them to a state of peace, when the truth is, they have only taught them an art of war; they have framed, I must confess, wholesome laws for the restraint of vice, but they raised first that devil, which now they conjure and cannot bind: though there were before no punishments for wickedness, yet there was less committed, because there were no rewards for it.—*Essays*.

Man's Greatness

THE GREATNESS of man is so evident, that it is even proved by his wretchedness. For what in animals is nature we call in man wretchedness; by which we recognize that, his nature being now like that of animals, he has fallen from a better nature which was once his.

For who is unhappy at not being a king, except a deposed king? Was Paulus Aemilius unhappy at being no longer consul? On the contrary, everybody thought him happy in having been consul, because the office could only be held for a time. But men thought Perseus so unhappy in being no longer king, because the condition of kingship implied his always being king, that they thought it strange that he endured life. Who is unhappy at having only one mouth? And who is not unhappy at having only one eye? Probably no man ever ventured to mourn at not having three eyes. But anyone is inconsolable at having none,—*Pensées*.

Of Poetry and Music

I KNOW VERY WELL that many, who pretend to be wise by the forms of being grave, are apt to despise both poetry and music as toys and trifles too light for the use or entertainment of serious men. But whoever find themselves wholly insensible to these charms would, I think, do well to keep their own counsel, for fear of reproaching their own temper, and bringing the goodness of their natures, if not of their understandings, into question. It may be thought at least an ill sign, if not an ill constitution, since some of the Fathers went so far as to esteem the love of music a sign of predestination, as the thing divine, and reserved for the felicities of Heaven itself. While this world lasts, I doubt not but the pleasure and request of these two entertainments will do so, too; and happy those that content themselves with these or any other so easy and so innocent. . . .

When all is done, human life is, at the greatest and the best, but like a forward child, that must be played with and humored a little to keep it quiet till it falls asleep, and then the care is over.—*Of Poetry.*

Of Great Place

WE OUGHT TO BE GLAD, when those that are fit for government, and called to it, are willing to take the burden of it upon them; yea, and to be very thankful to them too, that they will be at the pains, and can have the patience, to govern, and to live publicly. Therefore it is happy for the world that there are some who are born and bred up to it; and that custom hath made it easy, or at least tolerable to them. Else who that is wise would undertake it, since it is certainly much easier of the two to obey a just and wise government (I had almost said any government) than to govern justly and wisely. Not that I find fault with those who apply themselves to public business and affairs. They do well, and we are beholden to them. Some by their education, and being bred up to great things, and to be able to bear and manage great business with more ease than others, are peculiarly fitted to serve God and the public in this way: and they that do are worthy of double honour.

The advantage which men have by a more devout and retired and contemplative life, is, that they are not distracted about many things; their minds and affections are set upon one thing; and the whole stream and force of their affections run one way. All their thoughts and endeavours are united in one great end and design, which makes their life all of

a piece, and to be consistent with itself throughout.

Nothing but necessity, or the hope of doing more good than a man is capable of doing in a private station (which a modest man will not easily presume concerning himself) can recompense the trouble and uneasiness of a more public and busy life.—*Commonplace Book.*

Of Reading

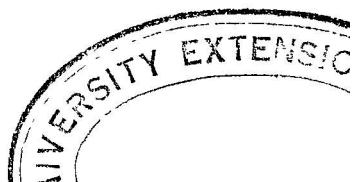
THIS IS THAT which I think great readers are apt to be mistaken in. Those who have read of everything are thought to understand everything too; but it is not always so. Reading furnishes the mind only with materials of knowledge; it is thinking makes what we read ours. We are of the ruminating kind, and it is not enough to cram ourselves with a great load of collections; unless we chew them over again, they will not give us strength and nourishment. There are indeed in some writers visible instances of deep thoughts, close and acute reasoning, and ideas well pursued. The light these would give would be of great use if their readers would observe and imitate them; all the rest at best are but particulars fit to be turned into knowledge, but that can be done only by our own meditation, and examining the reach, force, and coherence of what is said; and then, as far as we apprehend and see the connexion of ideas, so far it is ours; without that, it is but so much loose matter floating in our brain. The memory may be stored, but the judgement is little better, and the stock of knowledge not increased, by being able to repeat what others have said or produce the arguments we have found in them. Such a knowledge as this is but knowledge by hearsay, and the ostentation of it is at best but talking by rote, and very often upon weak and wrong principles. For all that is to be found in

books is not built upon true foundations, nor pretended to be built on.—*On the Conduct of the Understanding.*

The Heir of All Things

YOU NEVER ENJOY the world aright, till the Sea itself floweth in your veins, till you are clothed with the heavens, and crowned with the stars: and perceive yourself to be the sole heir of the whole world, and more than so, because men are in it who are every one sole heirs as well as you. Till you can sing and rejoice and delight in God, as misers do in gold, and Kings in sceptres, you never enjoy the world.

Till your spirit filleth the whole world, and the stars are your jewels; till you are as familiar with the ways of God in all Ages as with your walk and table: till you are intimately acquainted with that shady nothing out of which the world was made: till you love men so as to desire their happiness, with a thirst equal to the zeal of your own: till you delight in God for being good to all: you never enjoy the world. Till you more feel it than your private estate, and are more present in the hemisphere, considering the glories and the beauties there, than in your own house: Till you remember how lately you were made, and how wonderful it was when you came into it: and more rejoice in the palace of your glory, than if it had been made but to-day morning.—*Centuries of Meditations.*



The Trinity of Love

IN ALL LOVE there is a love begetting, and a love begotten, and a love proceeding. Which though they are one in essence subsist nevertheless in three several manners. For love is benevolent affection to another: Which is of itself, and by itself relateth to its object. It floweth from itself and resteth in its object. Love proceedeth of necessity from itself, for unless it be of itself it is not Love. Constraint is destructive and opposite to its nature. The Love from which it floweth is the fountain of Love. The Love which streameth from it, is the communication of Love, or Love communicated. The Love which resteth in the object is the Love which streameth to it. So that in all Love, the Trinity is clear. By secret passages without stirring it proceedeth to its object, and is as powerfully present as if it did not proceed at all. The Love that lieth in the bosom of the Lover, being the love that is perceived in the spirit of the Beloved: that is, the same in substance, though in the manner of substance, or subsistence, different. Love in the bosom is the parent of Love, Love in the stream is the effect of Love, Love seen, or dwelling in the object proceedeth from both. Yet are all these, one and the self-same Love: though three Loves.—*Centuries of Meditations.*

The Comfort of Friends

THEY THAT LOVE beyond the world cannot be separated by it.

Death cannot kill what never dies.

Nor can spirits ever be divided that love and live in the same divine principle; the root and record of their friendship.

If absence be not death, neither is theirs.

Death is but crossing the world, as friends do the seas; they live in one another still.

For they must needs be present, that love and live in that which is Omnipresent.

In this divine glass they see face to face; and their converse is free as well as pure.

This is the comfort of friends, that though they may be said to die, yet their friendship and society are, in the best sense, ever present, because immortal.
—*Fruits of Solitude.*

Meditation Upon a Broomstick

THIS SINGLE STICK, which you now behold ingloriously lying in that neglected corner, I once knew in a flourishing state in a forest; it was full of sap, full of leaves, and full of boughs; but now in vain does the busy art of man retend to vie with nature, by tying that withered bundle of twigs to its sapless trunk; it is now at best but the reverse of what it was, a tree turned upside down, the branches on the earth, and the root in the air; it is now handled by every dirty wench, condemned to do her drudgery, and, by a capricious kind of fate, destined to make her things clean, and be nasty itself; at length, worn out to the stumps in the service of the maids, it is either thrown out of doors, or condemned to the last use of kindling a fire. When I beheld this, I sighed, and said within myself: Surely mortal man is a broomstick! nature sent him into the world strong and lusty, in a thriving condition, wearing his own hair on his head, the proper branches of this reasoning vegetable, until the axe of intemperance has lopped off his green boughs, and left him a withered trunk; he then flies to art, and puts on a periwig, valuing himself upon an unnatural bundle of hairs, all covered with powder, that never grew on his head; but now should this our broomstick pretend to enter the scene, proud of those birchen spoils it never bore, and all covered with dust, though the sweepings of

the finest lady's chamber, we should be apt to ridicule and despise its vanity. Partial judges that we are of our own excellences, and other men's defaults!

But a broomstick, perhaps you will say, is an emblem of a tree standing on its head; and pray, what is man but a topsy-turvy creature, his animal faculties perpetually mounted on his rational, his head where his heels should be—grovelling on the earth! and yet, with all his faults, he sets up to be a universal reformer and corrector of abuses, a remover of grievances; rakes into every slut's corner of nature, bringing hidden corruptions to the light, and raises a mighty dust where there was none before, sharing deeply all the while in the very same pollutions he pretends to sweep away. His last days are spent in slavery to women, and generally the least deserving; till, worn out to the stumps, like his brother-besom, he is either kicked out of doors, or made use of to kindle flames for others to warm themselves by.

Delusion

IN THE PROPORTION that credulity is a more peaceful possession of the mind than curiosity, so far preferable is that wisdom, which converses about the surface, to that pretended philosophy, which enters into the depth of things, and then comes gravely back, with informations and discoveries, that in the inside they are good for nothing. The two senses, to which all objects first address themselves, are the sight and the touch; these never examine farther than the colour, the shape, the size, and whatever qualities dwell or are drawn by art upon the outward of bodies; and then comes reason officiously with tools for cutting, and opening, and mangling, and piercing; offering to demonstrate, that they are not of the same consistence quite through. Now I take all this to be the last degree of perverting nature; one of whose eternal laws it is, to put the best furniture forward. And therefore, in order to save the charges of all such expensive anatomy for the time to come, I do here think fit to inform the reader, that in such conclusions as these, reason is certainly in the right; and that in most corporeal beings which have fallen under my cognizance, the outside hath been infinitely preferable to the in; whereof I have been farther convinced from some late experiments. Last week I saw a woman flayed, and you will hardly believe how much it altered her person for the worse.—*The Tale of a Tub.*

The Wise and the Foolish

IT IS VERY STRANGE to consider that a creature like man, who is sensible of so many weaknesses and imperfections, should be actuated by a love of fame; that vice and ignorance, imperfection and misery should contend for praise and endeavor as much as possible to make themselves objects of admiration.

But notwithstanding man's essential perfection is but very little, his comparative perfection may be very considerable. If he looks upon himself in an abstracted light he has not much to boast of, but if he considers himself with regard to others he may find occasion of glorifying if not in his own virtues at least in the absence of another's imperfections. This gives a different turn to the reflections of the wise man and the fool. The first endeavors to shine in himself and the last to outshine others. The first is humbled by the sense of his own infirmities, the last is lifted up by the discovery of those which he observes in other men. The wise man considers what he wants and the fool what he abounds in. The wise man is happy when he gains his own approbation and the fool when he recommends himself to the applause of those about him.—*The Spectator*.

Westminster Abbey

WHEN I AM in a serious Humour, I very often walk by my self in *Westminster Abbey*; where the Gloominess of the Place, and the Use to which it is applied, with the Solemnity of the Building, and the Condition of the People who lye in it, are apt to fill the Mind with a kind of Melancholy, or rather Thoughtfulness, that is not disagreeable. . . .

For my own part, though I am always serious, I do not know what it is to be melancholy; and can therefore take a View of Nature in her deep and solemn Scenes, with the same Pleasure as in her most gay and delightful ones. By this means I can improve my self with those Objects, which others consider with Terror. When I look upon the Tombs of the Great, every Emotion of Envy dies in me; when I read the Epitaphs of the Beautiful, every inordinate Desire goes out; when I meet with the Grief of Parents upon a Tomb-stone, my Heart melts with Compassion; when I see the Tomb of the Parents themselves, I consider the Vanity of grieving for those whom we must quickly follow: When I see Kings lying by those who deposed them, when I consider rival Wits placed Side by Side, or the holy Men that divided the World with their Contests and Disputes, I reflect with Sorrow and Astonishment on the little Competitions, Factions, and Debates of Mankind. When I read the several Dates of the

Tombs of some that died Yesterday, and some six hundred Years ago, I consider that great Day when we shall all of us be Contemporaries, and make our Appearance together.—*The Spectator*.

JOSEPH ADDISON

True Happiness

TRUE HAPPINESS is of a retired nature, and an enemy to pomp and noise; it arises, in the first place, from the enjoyment of one's self; and, in the next, from the friendship and conversation of a few select companions. It loves shade and solitude, and naturally haunts groves and fountains, fields and meadows: in short, it feels everything it wants within itself, and receives no addition from multitudes of witnesses and spectators. On the contrary, false happiness loves to be in a crowd, and to draw the eyes of the world upon her. She does not receive any satisfaction from the applauses which she gives herself, but from the admiration which she raises in others. She flourishes in courts and palaces, theatres and assemblies, and has no existence but when she is looked upon.—*The Spectator*.

On Story Telling

I HAVE OFTEN THOUGHT that a story-teller is born, as well as a poet. It is, I think, certain, that some men have such a peculiar case of mind, that they see things in another light, than men of grave dispositions. Men of a lively imagination, and a mirthful temper, will represent things to their hearers in the same manner as they themselves were affected with them; and whereas serious spirits might perhaps have been disgusted at the sight of some odd occurrences in life; yet the very same occurrences shall please them in a well-told story, where the disagreeable parts of the images are concealed, and those only which are pleasing exhibited to the fancy. Story-telling is therefore not an art, but what we call a 'knack'; it doth not so much subsist upon wit as upon humour; and I will add, that it is not perfect without proper gesticulations of the body, which naturally attend such merry emotions of the mind. I know very well, that a certain gravity of countenance sets some stories off to advantage, where the hearer is to be surprised in the end; but this is by no means a general rule; for it is frequently convenient to aid and assist by cheerful looks, and whimsical agitations. I will go yet further, and affirm that the success of a story very often depends upon the make of the body, and formation of the features, of him who relates it. I have been of this opinion ever since I criticized upon the chin of

Dick Dewlap. I very often had the weakness to re-pine at the prosperity of his conceits, which made him pass for a wit with the widow at the coffee-house, and the ordinary mechanics that frequent it; nor could I myself forbear laughing at them most heartily, though upon examination I thought most of them very flat and insipid. I found after some time, that the merit of his wit was founded upon the shaking of a fat paunch, and the tossing up a pair of rosy jowls. Poor Dick had a fit of sickness, which robbed him of his fat and his fame at once; and it was full three months before he regained his reputation, which rose in proportion to his floridity. He is now very jolly and ingenious, and hath a good constitution for wit.—*The Guardian*.

SIR RICHARD STEELE

First Grief

THE FIRST Sense of Sorrow I ever knew was upon the Death of my Father, at which Time I was not quite Five Years of Age; but was rather amazed at what all the House meant, than possessed with a real Understanding why no Body was willing to play with me. I remember I went into the Room where his Body lay and my Mother sat weeping alone by it. I had my Battledore in my Hand, and fell a beating the Coffin and calling Papa; for, I know not how, I had some slight Idea that he was locked up there. My Mother caught me in her Arms, and, trans-

ported beyond all Patience of the silent Grief she was before in, she almost smothered me in her Embraces; and told me in a Flood of Tears, Papa could not hear me, and would play with me no more, for they were going to put him under Ground, where he could never come to us again. She was a very beautiful Woman, of a noble Spirit, and there was a Dignity in her Grief amidst all the Wildness of her Transport; which, methought, struck me with an Instinct of Sorrow, that, before I was sensible of what it was to grieve, seized my very Soul, and has made Pity the Weakness of my Heart ever since. The Mind in Infancy is, methinks, like the Body in Embryo; and receives Impressions so forcible, that they are as hard to be removed by Reason, as any Mark, with which a Child is born, is to be taken away by any future Application. Hence it is, that Good-nature in me is no Merit; but having been so frequently overwhelmed with her Tears before I knew the Cause of any Affliction, or could draw Defences from my own Judgment, I imbibed Commiseration, Remorse, and an unmanly Gentleness of Mind, which has since insnared me into Ten Thousand Calamities; and from whence I can reap no Advantage, except it be, that, in such a Humour as I am now in, I can the better indulge myself in the Softnesses of Humanity, and enjoy that sweet Anxiety which arises from the Memory of past Afflictions.—*The Tatler.*

Dissimulation

IT MAY BE OBJECTED, that I am now recommending dissimulation to you; I both own and justify it. It has been long said, *Qui nescit dissimulare nescit regnare*: I go still farther, and say, that without some dissimulation no business can be carried on at all. It is *simulation* that is false, mean, and criminal: that is the cunning which Lord Bacon calls, crooked or left-handed wisdom, and which is never made use of but by those who have not true wisdom. And the same great man says, that dissimulation is only to hide our own cards; whereas simulation is put on in order to look into other people's. Lord Bolingbroke, in his 'Idea of a Patriot King,' which he has lately published, and which I will send you by the first opportunity, says, very justly, that simulation is a *stiletto*; not only an unjust but an unlawful weapon, and the use of it very rarely to be excused, never justified. Whereas dissimulation is a shield, as secrecy is armour; and it is no more possible to preserve secrecy in business, without some degree of dissimulation, than it is to succeed in business without secrecy. He goes on, and says, that those two arts, of dissimulation and secrecy, are like the alloy mingled with pure ore: a little is necessary, and will not debase the coin below its proper standard; but if more than that little be employed (that is, simulation and cunning) the coin loses its currency, and the coiner his credit.—*Letters to his Son.*

Testament of Faith

YOU SEE I have some reason to wish that, in a future state, I may not only be as well as I was, but a little better. And I hope it; for I * * * trust in God. And when I observe that there is great frugality, as well as wisdom in His works, since He has been evidently sparing both of labor and materials; for by the various wonderful inventions of propagation He has provided for the continual peopling His world with plants and animals, without being at the trouble of repeated new creations; and by the natural reduction of compound substances to their original elements, capable of being employed in new compositions, He has prevented the necessity of creating new matter; so that the earth, water, air and perhaps fire, which being compounded from wood, do, when the wood is dissolved return and again become air, earth, fire and water; I say that when I see nothing annihilated, and not even a drop of water wasted, I cannot suspect the annihilation of souls, or believe that he will suffer the daily waste of millions of minds ready made that now exist and put Himself to the continual trouble of making new ones. Thus finding myself to exist in the world, I believe I shall in some shape or other, always exist; and, with all the inconveniences human life is liable to, I shall not object to a new edition of mine; hoping, however, that the errata of the last may be corrected.—*Letter to George Whatley, 1785.*

On Public Affairs

IT IS WONDERFUL how preposterously the affairs of this world are managed. Naturally one would imagine that the interest of a few individuals should give way to general interest; but individuals manage their affairs with so much more application, industry and address than the public do theirs that general interest most commonly gives way to particular. We assemble parliaments and councils to have the benefit of their collected wisdom, but we necessarily have, at the same time, the inconvenience of their collected passions, prejudices and private interests. By the help of these, artful men overpower their wisdom, and dupe its possessors; and if we may judge by the acts, arrests and edicts, all the world over, for regulating commerce, an assembly of great men is the greatest fool upon earth.—*Letter to Benjamin Vaughan, 1784.*

On Wasting Time

LIFE IS CONTINUALLY RAVAGED by invaders; one steals away an hour, and another a day; one conceals the robbery by hurrying us into business, another by lulling us with amusement; the depredation is continued through a thousand vicissitudes of tumult and tranquility, till, having lost all, we can lose no more. . . .

He whose rank or merit procures him the notice of mankind must give up himself, in a great measure, to the convenience or humour of those who surround him. Every man who is sick of himself will fly to him for relief; he that wants to speak will require him to hear; and he that wants to hear will expect him to speak. Hour passes after hour, the noon succeeds to morning, and the evening to noon, while a thousand objects are forced upon his attention, which he rejects as fast as they are offered, but which the custom of the world requires to be received with appearance of regard.

If we will have the kindness of others, we must endure their follies. He who cannot persuade himself to withdraw from society, must be content to pay a tribute of his time to a multitude of tyrants; to the loiterer, who makes appointments which he never keeps; to the consulter, who asks advice which he never takes; to the boaster, who blusters only to be praised; to the complainer, who whines only to be

pitied; to the projector, whose happiness is to entertain his friends with expectations which all but himself know to be vain; to the economist, who tells of bargains and settlements; to the politician, who predicts the fate of battles and breach of alliances; to the usurer, who compares the different funds; and to the talker, who talks only because he loves to be talking.

To put every man in possession of his own time, and rescue the day from this succession of usurpers, is beyond my power, and beyond my hope. Yet, perhaps, some stop might be put to this unmerciful persecution, if all would seriously reflect, that whoever pays a visit that is not desired, or talks longer than the hearer is willing to attend, is guilty of an injury which he cannot repair, and takes away that which he cannot give.—*The Idler*.

The Critic

CRITICISM IS A STUDY by which men grow important and formidable at very small expense. The power of invention has been conferred by nature upon few, and the labour of learning those sciences which may, by mere labour, be obtained is too great to be willingly endured; but every man can exert such judgment as he has upon the works of others; and he whom nature has made weak, and idleness keeps ignorant, may yet support his vanity by the name of a Critic.

I hope it will give comfort to great numbers who are passing through the world in obscurity, when I inform them how easily distinction may be obtained. All the other powers of literature are coy and haughty, they must be long courted, and at last are not always gained; but Criticism is a goddess easy of access, and forward of advance, who will meet the slow, and encourage the timorous; the want of meaning she supplies with words, and the want of spirit she recompenses with malignity.

This profession has one recommendation peculiar to itself, that it gives vent to malignity without real mischief. No genius was ever blasted by the breath of critics. The poison which, if confined, would have burst the heart, fumes away in empty hisses, and malice is set at ease with very little danger to merit. The Critic is the only man whose triumph is without another's pain, and whose greatness does not rise upon another's ruin.—*The Idler*.

The Universal Fallacy

WE ALWAYS make a secret comparison between a part and the whole; the termination of any period of life reminds us that life itself has likewise its termination; when we have done anything for the last time, we involuntarily reflect that a part of the days allotted us is past, and that as more is past there is less remaining.

It is very happily and kindly provided, that in every life there are certain pauses and interruptions, which force consideration upon the careless, and seriousness upon the light; points of time where one course of action ends and another begins; and by vicissitude of fortune, or alteration of employment, by change of place, or loss of friendship, we are forced to say of something, *this is the last*.

An even and unvaried tenour of life always hides from our apprehension the approach of its end. Succession is not perceived but by variation; he that lives today as he lived yesterday, and expects that, as the present day is, such will be the morrow, easily conceives time as running in a circle and returning to itself. This uncertainty of our duration is impressed commonly by dissimilitude of condition; it is only by finding life changeable that we are reminded of its shortness.

This conviction, however forcible at every new impression, is every moment fading from the mind; and partly by the inevitable incursion of new images, and partly by voluntary exclusion of unwel-

come thoughts, we are again exposed to the universal fallacy; and we must do another thing for the last time, before we consider that the time is nigh when we shall do no more.—*The Idler*.

Of Avarice

THE BEST EXCUSE that can be made for avarice is, that it generally prevails in old men, or in men of cold tempers, where all the other affections are extinct; and the mind being incapable of remaining without some passion or pursuit, at last finds out this monstrously absurd one, which suits the coldness and inactivity of its temper. At the same time, it seems very extraordinary, that so frosty, spiritless a passion should be able to carry us further than all the warmth of youth and pleasure. But if we look more narrowly into the matter we shall find, that this very circumstance renders the explication of the case more easy. When the temper is warm and full of vigour, it naturally shoots out more ways than one, and produces inferior passions to counterbalance, in some degree, its predominant inclination. It is impossible for a person of that temper, however bent on any pursuit, to be deprived of all sense of shame, or all regard to sentiments of mankind. His friends must have some influence over him; and other considerations are apt to have their weight. All this serves to restrain him within some bounds. But it is no wonder that the avaricious man, being, from the coldness of his temper, without regard to reputation, to friendship, or to pleasure, should be carried so far by his prevailing inclination, and should display his passion in such surprising instances.

Accordingly, we find no vice so irreclaimable as avarice; and though there scarcely has been a moralist or philosopher, from the beginning of the world to this day, who has not levelled a stroke at it, we hardly find a single instance of any person's being cured of it. For this reason, I am more apt to approve of those who attack it with wit and humour, than of those who treat it in a serious manner. There being so little hopes of doing good to the people infected with this vice, I would have the rest of mankind at least, diverted by our manner of exposing it; as indeed there is no kind of diversion, of which they seem so willing to partake,—*Essays*.

The Study of Plants

PLANTS SEEM to have been sown with profusion upon the earth, like the stars in heaven—to invite men, through the attraction of pleasure and of curiosity, to the study of Nature. But stars are placed far from us; it is necessary to make preliminary studies, to have instruments, machines, very long ladders, to reach them and bring them within our reach. Plants are there naturally; they are born under our feet, and in our hands, so to speak; and if the smallness of their essential parts sometimes removes them from our sight, the instruments which will enable us to see them are much easier to use than those of astronomy. Botany is the study of an idle and unemployed solitary; a needle and a magnifying lens are all the apparatus that is necessary for him to have. He walks about, he wanders freely from one object to another; he makes a review of every flower with interest and curiosity; and as soon as he commences to grasp the laws of their structure, he takes a pleasure without stain in observing them, as lively as if it cost him much. There is in this leisurely occupation a charm which is only felt when the passions are calmed, but which alone suffices to render life happy and sweet, but as soon as there is mingled a motive of interest or of vanity, either to fill empty places or to make books, as soon as we only wish to learn in order to teach, and only gather specimens to become

an author or professor, all this sweet charm evaporates, we see in the plants nothing but the instruments of our passions, we do not find any true pleasure in their study, we do not wish to know but to show that we know, and in the woods we are only in the theatre of the world, occupied with the care of getting ourselves admired; or rather, limiting ourselves to the botany of the study and the garden at the most, instead of observing plants in Nature, we only occupy ourselves with systems and methods; an eternal matter for dispute, which does not make one plant the better known, and does not throw any true light upon natural history or the Vegetable Kingdom — hence these hatreds, these jealousies, which the competition for celebrity excites among botanical authors, as much and more than among other scholars. Distorting this amiable study, they transplant it into the midst of cities and academies, where it degenerates no less than the exotic plants in the gardens of the curious.—*The Reveries of a Solitary*. (Translated by John Gould Fletcher.)

Observing Children

IF I HAVE MADE some progress in the knowledge of the human heart it is the pleasure I take in seeing and observing children that has given me this knowledge. The same pleasure, in my youth, was a sort of obstacle to it, for I play with children so gladly and with such a good heart that I scarcely dream of studying them. But when, as I grew old, I saw that my crooked figure disquieted them I abstained from my importunity; I preferred rather to deprive myself of a pleasure than to trouble their enjoyment; and content then to satisfy myself by watching all their games and their little tricks, I found the reward for my sacrifice in the information which these observations have made me acquire upon the first and true movements of nature, of which all our wise men know nothing.—*The Reveries of a Solitary*. (Translated by John Gould Fletcher.)

The Brute Creation

THERE IS A wonderful spirit of sociality in the brute creation, independent of sexual attachment: the congregating of gregarious birds in the winter is a remarkable instance.

Many horses, though quiet with company, will not stay one minute in a field by themselves: the strongest fences cannot restrain them. My neighbour's horse will not only not stay by himself abroad, but he will not bear to be left alone in a strange stable, without discovering the utmost impatience, and endeavouring to break the rack and manger with his fore-feet. He has been known to leap out a stable-window, through which dung was thrown, after company; and yet in other respects is remarkably quiet. Oxen and cows will not fatten by themselves; but will neglect the finest pasture that is not recommended by society. It would be needless to instance in sheep, which constantly flock together.

But this propensity seems not to be confined to animals of the same species; for we know a doe, still alive, that was brought up from a little fawn with a dairy of cows; with them it goes afield, and with them it returns to the yard. The dogs of the house take no notice of this deer, being used to her; but if strange dogs come by, a chase ensues; while the master smiles to see his favourite securely leading her pursuers over hedge, or gate, or stile, till she returns to the

cows, who, with fierce lowings and menacing horns, drive the assailants quite out of the pasture.

Even great disparity of kind and size does not always prevent social advances and mutual fellowship. For a very intelligent and observant person has assured me that, in the former part of his life, keeping but one horse, he happened also on a time to have but one solitary hen. These two incongruous animals spent much of their time together in a lonely orchard, where they saw no creature but each other. By degrees an apparent regard began to take place between these two sequestered individuals. The fowl would approach the quadruped with notes of complacency, rubbing herself gently against his legs; while the horse would look down with satisfaction, and move with the greatest caution and circumspection, lest he should trample on his diminutive companion. Thus, by mutual good offices, each seemed to console the vacant hours of the other; so that Milton, when he puts the following sentiment in the mouth of Adam, seems to be somewhat mistaken:

*Much less can bird with beast, or fish with fowl
So well converse, nor with the ox the ape.*
—*Natural History of Selborne.*

On Public Discontents

IT IS AN UNDERTAKING of some degree of delicacy to examine into the cause of public disorders. If a man happens not to succeed in such an enquiry, he will be thought weak and visionary; if he touches the true grievance, there is a danger that he may come near to persons of weight and consequence, who will rather be exasperated at the discovery of their errors, than thankful for the occasion of correcting them. If he should be obliged to blame favourites of the people, he will be considered as the tool of power; if he censures those in power, he will be looked on as an instrument of faction. But in all exertions of duty something is to be hazarded. In cases of tumult and disorder, our law has invested every man, in some sort, with the authority of a magistrate. When the affairs of the nation are distracted, private people are by the spirit of that law, justified in stepping a little out of their ordinary sphere. They enjoy a privilege, of somewhat more dignity and effect, than that of idle lamentation over the calamities of their country. They may look into them narrowly; they may reason upon them liberally; and if they should be so fortunate as to discover the true source of the mischief, and to suggest any probable method of removing it, though they may displease the rulers for the day, they are certainly of service to the cause of Government. Government is deeply interested in every-

thing which, even through the medium of some temporary uneasiness, may tend finally to compose the minds of the subject, and to conciliate their affections. I have nothing to do here with the abstract value of the voice of the people. But as long as reputation, the most precious possession of every individual, and as long as opinion, the great support of the State, depend entirely upon that voice, it can never be considered as a thing of little consequence either to individuals or to Government. Nations are not primarily ruled by laws; less by violence. Whatever original energy may be supposed either in force or regulation; the operation of both is, in truth, merely instrumental. Nations are governed by the same methods, and on the same principles, by which an individual without authority is often able to govern those who are his equals or his superiors; by a knowledge of their temper, and by a judicious management of it; I mean—when public affairs are steadily and quietly conducted: not when Government is nothing but a continued scuffle between the magistrate and the multitude; in which sometimes the one and sometimes the other is uppermost; in which they alternately yield and prevail, in a series of contemptible victories and scandalous submissions. The temper of the people amongst whom he presides ought therefore to be the first study of a Statesman. And the knowledge of this temper it is by no means impossible for him to attain, if he has not an interest in being ignorant of what it is his duty to learn.

To complain of the age we live in, to murmur at the present possessors of power, to lament the past,

to conceive extravagant hopes of the future, are the common dispositions of the greatest part of mankind; indeed the necessary effects of the ignorance and levity of the vulgar. Such complaints and humours have existed in all times; yet as all times have not been alike, true political sagacity manifests itself, in distinguishing that complaint which only characterizes the general infirmity of human nature, from those which are symptoms of the particular distemperature of our own air and season.—*Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents.*

EDMUND BURKE

Manners and Laws

MANNERS are of more importance than laws. Upon them, in a great measure, the laws depend. The law touches us but here and there, and now and then. Manners are what vex or soothe, corrupt or purify, exalt or debase, barbarize or refine us, by a constant, steady, uniform, insensible operation, like that of the air we breathe in.—*Letters on a Regicide Peace.*

On Conversation

THE RATIONAL INTERCOURSE kept up by conversation is one of our principal distinctions from brutes. We should therefore endeavour to turn this peculiar talent to our advantage, and consider the organs of speech as the instruments of understanding: we should be very careful not to use them as the weapons of vice, or tools of folly, and do our utmost to unlearn any trivial or ridiculous habits, which tend to lessen the value of such an inestimable prerogative. It is, indeed, imagined by some philosophers, that even birds and beasts (though without the power of articulation) perfectly understand one another by the sounds they utter; and that dogs, cats, etc., have each a particular language to themselves, like different nations. Thus it may be supposed that the nightingales of Italy have as fine an ear for their own native woodnotes as any signor or signora for an Italian air; that the boars of Westphalia gruntle as expressively through the nose as the inhabitants in High German; and that the frogs in the dykes of Holland croak as intelligibly as the natives jabber their Low-Dutch. However this may be, we may consider those whose tongues hardly seem to be under the influence of reason, and do not keep up the proper conversation of human creatures, as imitating the language of different animals. Thus, for instance, the affinity between Chatterers and Mon-

keys, and Praters and Parrots, is too obvious not to occur at once; Grunters and Growlers may be justly compared to Hogs; Snarlers are Curs that continually show their teeth, but never bite; and the Spit-fire passionate are a sort of wild cats that will not bear stroking, but will purr when they are pleased. Complainers are Screech-Owls; and Story-tellers, always repeating the same dull note are Cuckoos. Poets that prick up their ears at their own hideous braying are no better than Asses. Critics in general are venomous Serpents that delight in hissing, and some of them who have got by heart a few technical terms without knowing their meaning are no other than Magpies. I myself, who have crowed to the whole town for near three years past, may perhaps put my readers in mind of a Dunghill Cock; but as I must acquaint them, that they will hear the last of me on this day fortnight, I hope they will then consider me as a Swan, who is supposed to sing sweetly at his dying moments.—*Connoisseur*.

The Later Years

THE PRESENT is a fleeting moment, the past is no more; and our prospect of futurity is dark and doubtful. This day may possibly be my last; but the laws of probability, so true in general, so fallacious in particular, still allow me about fifteen years, and I shall soon enter into the period which, as the most agreeable of his long life, was selected by the judgment and experience of the sage Fontenelle. His choice is approved by the eloquent historian of Nature, who fixes our moral happiness to the mature season in which our passions are supposed to be calmed, our duties fulfilled, our ambition satisfied, and our fame and fortune established on a solid basis. In private conversation, that great and amiable man added the weight of his own experience; and this autumnal felicity might be exemplified in the lives of Voltaire, Hume, and many other men of letters. I am far more inclined to embrace than dispute this comfortable doctrine. I will not suppose any premature decay of the mind or body; but I must reluctantly observe that two causes, the abbreviation of time and the failure of hope, will always tinge with a browner shade the evening of life.—*Autobiography.*

Panics

'TIS SURPRISING to see how rapidly a panic will sometimes run through a country. All nations and ages have been subject to them: Britain has trembled like an ague at the report of a French fleet of flat bottomed boats; and in the fourteenth century the whole English army, after ravaging the kingdom of France, was driven back like men petrified with fear; and this brave exploit was performed by a few broken forces collected and headed by a woman, Joan of Arc. Would that heaven might inspire some Jersey maid to spirit up her countrymen, and save her fair fellow sufferers from ravage and ravishment! Yet panics, in some cases, have their uses; they produce as much good as hurt. Their duration is always short; the mind soon grows through them, and acquires a firmer habit than before. But their peculiar advantage is, that they are the touchstones of sincerity and hypocrisy, and bring things and men to light, which might otherwise have lain forever undiscovered. In fact, they have the same effect on secret traitors, which an imaginary apparition would have upon a private murderer. They sift out the hidden thoughts of man and hold them up in public to the world. Many a disguised tory has lately shown his head, that shall penitentially solemnize with curses the day on which Howe arrived upon the Delaware.—*The Crisis*.

After Crisis

'THE TIMES that tried men's souls' are over—and the greatest and completest revolution the world ever knew, gloriously and happily accomplished.

But to pass from the extremes of danger to safety—from the tumult of war to the tranquillity of peace, though sweet in contemplation, requires a gradual composure of the senses to receive it. Even calmness has the power of stunning, when it opens too instantly upon us. The long and raging hurricane that should cease in a moment, would leave us in a state rather of wonder than enjoyment; and some moments of recollection must pass, before we could be capable of tasting the felicity of repose. There are but few instances, in which the mind is fitted for sudden transitions: it takes in its pleasures by reflection and comparison and those must have time to act, before the relish for new scenes is complete. * * *

To see it in our power to make a world happy—to teach mankind the art of being so—to exhibit, on the theater of the universe a character hitherto unknown—and to have, as it were, a new creation intrusted to our hands, are honours that command reflection, and can neither be too highly estimated, nor too gratefully received.—*Thoughts on Peace.*

The Effects of War

IT IS NOT among the least of the calamities of a long continued war, that it unhinges the mind from those nice sensations which at other times appear so amiable. The continued spectacle of woe blunts the finer feelings, and the necessity of bearing with the sight, renders it familiar. In like manner, are many of the moral obligations of society weakened, till the custom of acting by necessity becomes an apology, where it is truly a crime. Yet let but a nation conceive rightly of its character, and it will be chastely just in protecting it. None ever began with a fairer than America and none can be under a greater obligation to preserve it.

The debt which America has contracted, compared with the cause she has gained, and the advantages to flow from it, ought scarcely to be mentioned. She has it in her choice to do, and to live as happily as she pleases. The world is in her hands. She has no foreign power to monopolize her commerce, perplex her legislation, or control her prosperity. The struggle is over, which must one day have happened, and, perhaps, never could have happened at a better time. And instead of a domineering master, she has gained an ally whose exemplary greatness, and universal liberality, have extorted a confession even from her enemies.—*Thoughts on Peace.*

The Generations

CAN ONE GENERATION bind another, and all others, in succession forever? I think not. The Creator has made the earth for the living, not the dead. Rights and powers can only belong to persons, not to things, not to mere matter, unendowed with will. The dead are not even things. The particles of matter which composed their bodies, make part now of the bodies of other animals, vegetables, or minerals, of a thousand forms. To what then are attached the rights and powers they held while in the form of men? A generation may bind itself as long as its majority continues in life; when that has disappeared, another majority is in place, holds all the rights and powers their predecessors once held, and may change their laws and institutions to suit themselves. Nothing then is unchangeable but the inherent and unalienable rights of man.—*From a letter to Major John Cartwright, June 5, 1824.*

Ingratitude

ONE GREAT CAUSE of our insensibility to the goodness of the Creator is the very *extensiveness* of his bounty. We prize but little, what we share only in common with the rest, or with the generality, of our species. When we hear of blessings, we think forthwith of successes, of prosperous fortunes, of honors, riches, preferments, i.e. of those advantages and superiorities over others, which we happen either to possess, or to be in pursuit of, or to covet. The common benefits of our nature entirely escape us. Yet these are the great things. These constitute, what most properly ought to be accounted blessings of Providence; what alone, if we might so speak, are worthy of its care. Nightly rest and daily bread, the ordinary use of our limbs, and senses, and understandings, are gifts which admit of no comparison with any other. Yet, because almost every man we meet with possesses these, we leave them out of our enumeration. They raise no sentiment: they move no gratitude. Now, herein, is our judgement perverted by our selfishness. A blessing ought in truth to be the *more* satisfactory, the bounty at least of the donor is rendered more conspicuous, by its very diffusion, its commonness, its cheapness; by its falling to the lot, and forming the happiness, of the great bulk and body of our species, as well as of ourselves. Nay even when we do not possess it, it ought to be matter of thankfulness that others do.

—*Natural Theology.*

Actions and Words

ART IS LONG, life short, judgment difficult, opportunity transient. To act is easy, to think is hard; to act according to our thought is troublesome. Every beginning is cheerful; the threshold is the place of expectation. The boy stands astonished, his impressions guide him; he learns sportfully, seriousness comes on him by surprise. Imitation is born with us; what should be imitated is not easy to discover. The excellent is rarely found, more rarely valued. The height charms us, the steps to it do not; with the summit in our eye, we love to walk along the plain. It is but a part of art that can be taught; the artist needs it all. Who knows it half, speaks much and is always wrong; who knows it wholly, inclines to act and speaks seldom or late. The former have no secrets and no force; the instruction they can give is like baked bread, savoury and satisfying for a single day; but flour cannot be sown, and seed corn ought not to be ground. Words are good, but they are not the best. The best is not to be explained by words. The spirit in which we act is the highest matter. Action can be understood and again represented by the spirit alone. No one knows what he is doing while he acts aright; but of what is wrong we are always conscious. Whoever works with symbols only is a pedant, a hypocrite, or a bungler. There are many such, and they like to be together. Their babbling detains the scholar; their obstinate mediocrity vexes even the best. The instruction which the true artist

gives us opens the mind; for where words fail him, deeds speak. The true scholar learns from the known to unfold the unknown, and approaches more and more to being a master.

—*Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship.*

The Poet

THE POET is chiefly distinguished from other men by a greater promptness to think and feel without immediate external excitement, and a greater power in expressing such thoughts and feelings as are produced in him in that manner. But these passions and thoughts and feelings are the general passions and thoughts and feelings of men. And with what are they connected? Undoubtedly with our moral sentiments and animal sensations, and with the causes which excite these; with the operations of the elements, and the appearances of the visible universe; with storm and sunshine, with the revolutions of the seasons, with cold and heat, with loss of friends and kindred, with injuries and resentments, gratitude and hope, with fear and sorrow. These, and the like, are the sensations and objects which the Poet describes, as they are the sensations of other men and the objects which interest them.

—*Preface to 2nd ed., Lyrical Ballads.*

Strength Through Justice

THIS is what is called country. Equal rights to unequal possessions, equal justice to the rich and poor: this is what men come out to fight for, and to defend. Such a country has no legal injuries to remember, no legal murders to revenge, no legal robbery to redress; it is strong in its justice; it is then that the use and object of all this assemblage of gentlemen and arrangement of juries, and the deserved veneration in which we hold the character of English judges, is understood in all its bearings, and in its fullest effects; men die for such things—they cannot be subdued by foreign force where such just practices prevail. The sword of ambition is shivered to pieces against such a bulwark. Nations fall where judges are unjust, because there is nothing which the multitude think worth defending; but nations do not fall which are treated as we are treated, but they rise as we have risen, and they shine as we have shone, and die as we have died, too much used to justice, and too much used to freedom, to care for that life which is not just and free. I call you all to witness if there be any exaggerated picture in this; the sword is just sheathed, the flag is just furled, the last sound of the trumpet has just died away. You all remember what a spectacle this country exhibited; one heart, one voice—one weapon, one purpose. And why? Because this country is a country of the law; because the

judge is a judge for the peasant as well as for the palace; because every man's happiness is guarded by fixed rules from tyranny and caprice. This town this week, the business of the next few days, would explain to any enlightened European why other nations *did* fall in the storms of the world, and why we *did not* fall. The Christian patience you may witness, the impartiality of the judgment-seat, the disrespect of persons, the disregard of consequences. These attributes of justice do not end with arranging your conflicting rights, and mine; they give strength to the English people, duration to the English name; they turn the animal courage of this people into moral and religious courage, and present to the lowest of mankind plain reasons and strong motives why they should resist aggression from without, and bind themselves a living rampart round the land of their birth.

—*The Judge that Smites Contrary to the Law.*

Of Shakespeare

NO MAN was ever yet a great poet, without being at the same time a profound philosopher. For poetry is the blossom and the fragrancy of all human knowledge, human thoughts, human passions, emotions, language. In Shakespeare's poems the creative power and the intellectual energy wrestle as in a war embrace. Each in its excess of strength seems to threaten the extinction of the other. At length in the DRAMA they were reconciled, and fought each with its shield before the breast of the other. Or like two rapid streams, that, at their first meeting within narrow and rocky banks, mutually strive to repel each other and intermix reluctantly and in tumult; but soon finding a wider channel and more yielding shores blend, and dilate, and flow in one current and with one voice. The "Venus and Adonis" did not perhaps allow the display of the deeper passions. But the story of Lucretia seems to favour and even demand their intensest workings. And yet we find in Shakespeare's management of the tale neither pathos, nor any other dramatic quality. There is the same minute and faithful imagery as in the former poem, in the same vivid colours, inspirited by the same impetuous vigour of thought, and diverging and contracting with the same activity of the assimilative and of the modifying faculties; and with a yet larger display, a yet wider range of knowledge and reflection; and

lastly, with the same perfect dominion, often domination, over the whole world of language. What then shall we say? even this; that Shakespeare, no mere child of nature; no automaton of genius; no passive vehicle of inspiration possessed by the spirit, not possessing it; first studied patiently, meditated deeply, understood minutely, till knowledge, become habitual and intuitive, wedded itself to his habitual feelings, and at length gave birth to that stupendous power, by which he stands alone, with no equal or second in his own class; to that power which seated him on one of the two glory-smitten summits of the poetic mountain, with Milton as his compeer, not rival.—*Biographia Literaria*.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Types of Readers

READERS MAY BE DIVIDED into four classes:

1. Sponges, who absorb all they read and return it nearly in the same state, only a little dirtied.
2. Sand-glasses, who retain nothing and are content to get through a book for the sake of getting through the time.
3. Strain-bags, who retain merely the dregs of what they read.
4. Mogul diamonds, equally rare and valuable, who profit by what they read, and enable others to profit by it also.—*Notebooks*.

Precision in the Use of Terms

I ADVERTISED in my last lecture to the prevailing laxity in the use of terms: this is the principal complaint to which the moderns are exposed; but it is a grievous one in as much as it inevitably tends to the misapplication of words, and to the corruption of language. I mentioned the word ‘taste,’ but the remark applies not merely to substantives and adjectives, to things and their epithets, but to verbs: thus, how frequently is the verb ‘indorsed’ strained from its true signification, as given by Milton in the expression, ‘And elephants endorsed with towers.’ Again, ‘virtue’ has been equally perverted: originally it signified merely strength; then it became strength of mind and valour, and it has now been changed to the class term for moral excellence in all its various species. I only introduce these as instances by the way, and nothing could be easier than to multiply them.

At the same time, while I recommend precision both of thought and expression, I am far from advocating a pedantic niceness in the choice of language: such a course would only render conversation stiff and stilted. Dr. Johnson used to say that in the most unrestrained discourse he always sought for the properest word—that which best and most exactly conveyed his meaning: to a certain point he was right, but because he carried it too far, he was often

laborious where he ought to have been light, and formal where he ought to have been familiar. Men ought to endeavour to distinguish subtly, that they may be able afterwards to assimilate truly.—*Lectures on Shakespeare.*

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Inward Blindness

TALK TO A BLIND MAN—he knows he wants the sense of sight, and willingly makes the proper allowances. But there are certain internal senses which a man may want, and yet be wholly ignorant that he wants them. It is most unpleasant to converse with such persons on subjects of taste, philosophy, or religion. Of course, there is no *reasoning* with them, for they do not possess the facts, on which the reasoning must be grounded. Nothing is possible but a naked dissent, which implies a sort of unsocial contempt; or—what a man of kind disposition is very likely to fall into—a heartless tacit acquiescence, which borders too nearly on duplicity.—*Notebooks.*

The Love of Nature

THE LOVE OF NATURE is ever returned double to us, not only (as) the delighter in our delight, but by linking our sweetest, but of themselves perishable feelings to distinct and vivid images, which we ourselves, at times, and which a thousand casual recollections recall to our memory. She is the preserver, the treasurer, of our joys. Even in sickness and nervous diseases she has peopled our imagination with lovely forms, which have sometimes overpowered the inward pain and brought with them their old sensations. And even when all men have seemed to desert us, and the friend of our heart has passed on with one glance from his "cold disliking eye—" yet even then the blue heaven spreads itself out and bends over us, and the little tree still shelters us under its plumage as a second cope, a domestic firmament, and the low creeping gale will sigh in the heath plant and soothe us by sound of sympathy, till the lulled grief lose itself in fixed gaze on the purple heath-blossom, till the present beauty becomes a vision of memory.—*Anima Poetae*.

Mortality

NOT CHILDHOOD ALONE, but the young man till thirty, never feels practically that he is mortal. He knows it indeed, and, if need were, he could preach a homily on the fragility of life; but he brings it not home to himself, any more than in a hot June we can appropriate to our imagination the freezing days of December. But now, shall I confess a truth?—I feel these audits but too powerfully. I begin to count the probabilities of my duration, and to grudge at the expenditure of moments and shortest periods, like misers' farthings. In proportion as the years both lessen and shorten, I set more count upon their periods, and would fain lay my ineffectual finger upon the spoke of the great wheel. I am not content to pass away "like a weaver's shuttle." Those metaphors solace me not, nor sweeten the unpalatable draught of mortality. I care not to be carried with the tide, that smoothly bears human life to eternity; and reluct at the inevitable course of destiny. I am in love with this green earth; the face of town and country, the unspeakable rural solitudes, and the sweet security of streets.—*Essays of Elia.*

On Going a Journey

ONE OF THE PLEASANTEST THINGS in the world is going a journey; but I like to go by myself. I can enjoy society in a room; but out of doors, nature is company enough for me. I am then never less alone than when alone.

The fields his study, nature was his book.

I cannot see the wit of walking and talking at the same time. When I am in the country I wish to vegetate like the country. I am not criticising hedges and black cattle. I go out of town in order to forget the town and all that is in it. There are those who for this purpose go to watering-places, and carry the metropolis with them. I like more elbow-room and fewer encumbrances. I like solitude, when I give myself up to it, for the sake of solitude; nor do I ask for

a friend in my retreat,

Whom I may whisper solitude is sweet.

The soul of a journey is liberty, perfect liberty, to think, feel, do, just as one pleases. We go a journey chiefly to be free of all impediments and of all inconveniences; to leave ourselves behind, much more to get rid of others. It is because I want a little breathing-space to muse on indifferent matters, where Contemplation

*May plume her feathers and let grow her wings,
That in the various bustle of resort*

Were all too ruffled, and sometimes impair'd,
that I absent myself from the town for a while, with-

out feeling at a loss the moment I am left by myself. . . . Give me the clear blue sky over my head, and the green turf beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a three hours' march to dinner—and then to thinking!—*Table-Talk*.

WILLIAM HAZLITT

Humor and Wit

HUMOR is the describing the ludicrous as it is in itself; wit is the exposing of it, by comparing or contrasting it with something else. Humor is, as it were, the growth of nature and accident; wit is the product of art and fancy. Humor, as it is shown in books, is an imitation of the natural or acquired absurdities of mankind, or of the ludicrous in accident, situation and character; wit is the illustrating and heightening the sense of that absurdity by some sudden and unexpected likeness or opposition of one thing to another, which sets off the quality we laugh at or despise in a still more contemptible or striking point of view. Wit, as distinguished from poetry, is the imagination or fancy inverted, and so applied to given objects, as to make the little look less, the mean more light and worthless; or to divert our admiration or wean our affections from that which is lofty and impressive, instead of producing a more intense admiration and exalted passion, as poetry does.—*Essays*.

The Friendless

THERE ARE PERSONS who cannot make friends. Who are they? Those who cannot be friends. It is not the want of understanding or good nature, of entertaining or useful qualities, that you complain of: on the contrary, they have probably many points of attraction; but they have one that neutralizes all these—they care nothing about you, and are neither the better nor worse for what you think of them. They manifest no joy at your approach; and when you leave them it is with a feeling that they can do just as well without you. This is not sullenness, nor indifference, nor absence of mind; but they are intent solely on their own thoughts, and you are merely one of the subjects they exercise them upon. They live in society as in a solitude; and, however their brain works, their pulse beats neither faster nor slower for the common accidents of life.—*Essays.*

On Conversation

THE SOUL OF CONVERSATION is sympathy.—Authors should converse chiefly with authors, and their talk should be of books. “When Greek meets Greek, then comes the tug of war.” There is nothing so pedantic as pretending not to be pedantic. No man can get above his pursuit in life; it is getting above himself, which is impossible. There is a freemasonry in all things. You can only speak to be understood, but this you cannot be, except by those who are in the secret. Hence an argument has been drawn to supersede the necessity of conversation altogether; for it has been said, that there is no use in talking to people of sense, who know all that you can tell them, nor to fools, who will not be instructed. There is, however, the smallest encouragement to proceed, when you are conscious that the more you really enter into a subject, the farther you will be from the comprehension of your hearers—and that the more proofs you give of any position, the more odd and out-of-the-way they will think your notions. . . . In general, wit shines only by reflection. You must take your cue from your company—must rise as they rise, and sink as they fall. You must see that your good things, your knowing allusions, are not flung away, like the pearls in the adage. What a check it is to be asked a foolish question; to find that the first principles are not understood! You are thrown on your back

immediately, the conversation is stopped like a country-dance by those who do not know the figure. But when a set of adepts, of illuminati, get about a question, it is worth while to hear them talk. They may snarl and quarrel over it, like dogs; but they pick it bare to the bone; they masticate it thoroughly.—*Plain Speaker.*

WILLIAM HAZLITT

Perfect Love

PERFECT LOVE has this advantage in it, that it leaves the possessor of it nothing farther to desire. There is one object (at least) in which the soul finds absolute content, for which it seeks to live, or dares to die. The heart has, as it were, filled up the moulds of the imagination. The truth of passion keeps pace with and outvies the extravagance of mere language. There are no words so fine, no flattery so soft, that there is not a sentiment beyond them, that it is impossible to express, at the bottom of the heart where true love is. What idle sounds the common phrases, *adorable creature, angel, divinity*, are! What a proud reflection it is to have a feeling answering to all these, rooted in the breast, unalterable, unutterable, to which all other feelings are light and vain! Perfect love reposes on the object of its choice, like the halcyon on the wave; and the air of heaven is around it.—*Liber Amoris.*

Coleridge

I MAY SAY of him here, that he is the only person I ever knew who answered to the idea of a man of genius. He is the only person from whom I ever learnt anything. There is only one thing he could learn from me in return, but that he has not. He was the first poet I ever knew. His genius at that time had angelic wings, and fed on manna. He talked on for ever; and you wished him to talk on for ever. His thoughts did not seem to come with labour and effort; but as if borne on the gusts of genius, and as if the wings of his imagination lifted him from off his feet. His voice rolled on the ear like the pealing organ, and its sound alone was the music of thought. His mind was clothed with wings; and raised on them, he lifted philosophy to heaven. In his descriptions, you then saw the progress of human happiness and liberty in bright and never-ending succession, like the steps of Jacob's ladder, with airy shapes ascending and descending, and with the voice of God at the top of the ladder. And shall I, who heard him then, listen to him now?—Not I! That spell is broke; that time is gone for ever; that voice is heard no more: but still the recollection comes rushing by with thoughts of long-past years, and rings in my ears with never-dying sound.—*Lectures on the English Poets.*

Good Sense in Women

WOMEN HAVE OFTEN more of what is called *good sense* than men. They have fewer pretensions; are less implicated in theories; and judge of objects more from their immediate and involuntary impression on the mind, and, therefore, more truly and naturally. They cannot reason wrong; for they do not reason at all. They do not think or speak by rule; and they have in general more eloquence and wit, as well as sense, on that account. By their wit, sense and eloquence together, they generally contrive to govern their husbands.—*Essays*.

WILLIAM HAZLITT

On Reputation

A MAN'S REPUTATION is not in his own keeping, but lies at the mercy of the profligacy of others. Calumny requires no proof. The throwing out malicious imputations against any character leaves a stain, which no after-refutation can wipe out. To create an unfavorable impression, it is not necessary that certain things should be *true*, but that they *have been said*. The imagination is of so delicate a texture that even words wound it.—*Essays*.

The Poets' Corner

I PASSED SOME TIME in Poets' Corner, which occupies an end of one of the transepts or cross aisles of the abbey. The monuments are generally simple; for the lives of literary men afford no striking themes for the sculptor. Shakespeare and Addison have statues erected to their memories; but the greater part have busts, medallions, and sometimes mere inscriptions. Notwithstanding the simplicity of these memorials, I have always observed that the visitors to the abbey remained longest about them. A kinder and fonder feeling takes place of that cold curiosity or vague admiration with which they gaze on the splendid monuments of the great and the heroic. They linger about these as about the tombs of friends and companions; for indeed there is something of companionship between the author and the reader. Other men are known to posterity only through the medium of history, which is continually growing faint and obscure; but the intercourse between the author and his fellow men is ever new, active, and immediate. He has lived for them more than for himself; he has sacrificed surrounding enjoyments, and shut himself up from the delights of social life, that he might the more intimately commune with distant minds and distant ages. Well may the world cherish his renown; for it has been purchased, not by deeds of violence and blood, but by the diligent dis-

pensation of pleasure. Well may posterity be grateful to his memory; for he has left it an inheritance, not of empty names and sounding actions, but whole treasures of wisdom, bright gems of thought, and golden veins of language.—*The Sketch Book.*

On Democracy

ALL THAT DEMOCRACY MEANS, is as equal a participation in rights as is practicable; and to pretend that social equality is a condition of popular institutions, is to assume that the latter are destructive of civilization, for, as nothing is more self-evident than the impossibility of raising all men to the highest standard of tastes and refinement, the alternative would be to reduce the entire community to the lowest. The whole embarrassment on this point exists in the difficulty of making men comprehend qualities they do not themselves possess. We can all perceive the difference between ourselves and our inferiors, but when it comes to a question of the difference between us and our superiors, we fail to appreciate merits of which we have no proper conception. In face of this obvious difficulty, there is the safe and just governing rule, already mentioned, or that of permitting every one to be the undisturbed judge of his own habits and associations, so long as they are innocent, and do not impair the rights of others to be equally judges for themselves.—*The American Democrat.*

Poets As Legislators

THE MOST UNFAILING HERALD, companion, and follower of the awakening of a great people to work a beneficial change in opinion or institution, is poetry. At such periods there is an accumulation of the power of communicating and receiving intense and impassioned conceptions respecting man and nature. The persons in whom this power resides may often, as far as regards many portions of their nature, have little apparent correspondence with that spirit of good of which they are the ministers. But even whilst they deny and abjure, they are yet compelled to serve the power which is seated on the throne of their own soul. It is impossible to read the compositions of the most celebrated writers of the present day without being startled with the electric life which burns within their words. They measure the circumference and sound the depths of human nature with a comprehensive and all-penetrating spirit, and they are themselves perhaps the most sincerely astonished at its manifestations; for it is less their spirit than the spirit of the age. Poets are the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration; the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present; the words which express what they understand not; the trumpets which sing to battle, and feel not what they inspire; the influence which is moved not, but moves. Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.—*Essays, Letters from Abroad, The Coliseum.*

Axioms of Poetry

IN ENDYMION, I have most likely but moved into the gocar from the leading-strings—In poetry I have a few axioms, and you will see how far I am from their centre.

1st. I think poetry should surprise by a fine excess, and not by singularity; It should strike the reader as a wording of his own highest thoughts, and appear almost a remembrance.

2nd. Its touches of beauty should never be half-way, thereby making the reader breathless, instead of content. The rise, the progress, the setting of Imagery should, like the sun, come natural to him, shine over him, and set soberly, although in magnificence, leaving him in the luxury of twilight. But it is easier to think what poetry should be, than to write it—And this leads me to

Another axiom—That if poetry comes not as naturally as the leaves to a tree, it had better not come at all.—However it may be with me, I cannot help looking into new countries with ‘O for a Muse of Fire to ascend!’ If Endymion serves me as a pioneer, perhaps I ought to be content—I have great reason to be content, for thank God I can read, and perhaps understand Shakespeare to his depths; and I have, I am sure, many friends, who, if I fail, will attribute any change in my life and temper to humbleness rather than pride—to a cowering under the wings of great poets, rather than to a bitterness that I am not appreciated.—*To John Taylor, 27 February 1818.*

Men Worthy of Honour

TWO MEN I HONOUR, and no third. First, the toil-worn Craftsman that with earth-made Implement laboriously conquers the Earth, and makes her man's. Venerable to me is the hard Hand; crooked, coarse; wherein notwithstanding lies a cunning virtue, indefeasibly royal, as of the Sceptre of this Planet. Venerable too is the rugged face, all weather-tanned, besoiled, with its rude intelligence; for it is the face of a Man living manlike. O, but the more venerable for thy rudeness, and even because we must pity as well as love thee! Hardly-entreated Brother! For us was thy back so bent, for us were thy straight limbs and fingers so deformed: thou wert our Conscript, on whom the lot fell, and fighting our battles wert so marred. For in thee too lay a god-created Form but it was not to be unfolded; encrusted must it stand with the thick adhesions and defacements of Labour: and thy body, like thy soul, was not to know freedom. Yet toil on, toil on: *thou* art in thy duty, be out of it who may; thou toilest for the altogether indispensable, for daily bread.

A second man I honour, and still more highly: Him who is seen toiling for the spiritually indispensable; not daily bread, but the bread of Life. Is not he too in his duty; endeavouring towards inward Harmony; revealing this, by act or by word, through all his outward endeavours, be they high or low? High-

est of all, when his outward and his inward endeavour are one; when we can name him Artist; not earthly Craftsman only, but inspired Thinker, who with heaven-made Implement conquers Heaven for us! If the poor and humble toil that we have Food, must not the high and glorious toil for him in return, that he have Light, have Guidance, Freedom, Immortality? These two, in all their degrees, I honour: all else is chaff and dust, which let the wind blow whither it listeth.

Unspeakably touching is it, however, when I find both dignities united; and he that must toil outwardly for the lowest of man's wants, is also toiling inwardly for the highest. Sublimier in this world know I nothing than a Peasant Saint, could such now anywhere be met with. Such a one will take thee back to Nazareth itself; thou wilt see the splendour of Heaven spring forth from the humblest depths of Earth, like a light shining in great darkness—*Sartor Resartus*.

Vanity and Pride

PRIDE IS HANDSOME, economical; pride eradicates so many vices, letting none subsist but itself, that it seems as if it were a great gain to exchange vanity for pride. Pride can go without domestics, without fine clothes, can live in a house with two rooms, can eat potato, purslain, beans, lyed corn, can work on the soil, can talk with poor men, or sit silent well contented in fine salons. But vanity costs money, labor, horses, men, women, health and peace, and is still nothing at last, a long way leading nowhere. Only one drawback: proud people are intolerably selfish, and the vain are gentle and giving.—*The Conduct of Life*.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

A Quality of Greatness

CHILDREN LIKE THE STORY that makes them weep better than the one that makes them laugh. Men love the play, or the fight, or the news that scares or agitates them. And the great man loves the conversation or the book that convicts him, not that which soothes and flatters him. For this opens to him a new and great career, fills him with hope. Therefore, a great man always keeps before him the transcendent and humbles himself in its presence. Losing this, he is no longer great.—*Journals, Sept. 20, 1839.*

Our Link With History

IT IS REMARKABLE that involuntarily we always read as superior beings. Universal history, the poets, the romancers, do not in their stateliest pictures—in the sacerdotal, the imperial palaces, in the triumphs of will or genius—anywhere lose our ear, anywhere make us feel that we intrude, that this is for better men; but rather it is true, that in their grandest strokes we feel most at home. All that Shakespeare says of the King, yonder slip of a boy feels to be true of himself. We sympathize in the great moments of history, in the great discoveries, the great resistances, the great prosperities of men—because their law was enacted, the sea was searched, the land was found, or the blow was struck *for us*, as we ourselves in that place would have done or applauded.—*Essays: History.*

The Universal Mind

THERE IS ONE MIND common to all individual men. Every man is an inlet to the same and to all of the same. He that is once admitted to the right of reason is made a freeman of the whole estate. What Plato has thought he may think; what a saint has felt he may feel; what at any time has befallen any man he can understand. Who hath access to this universal mind is a party to all that is or can be done, for this is the only and sovereign. * * *

Of the universal mind each individual man is one more incarnation. All its properties consist in him. Each new fact in his private experience flashes a light on what great bodies of men have done, and the crises of his life refer to national crises. Every revolution was first a thought in one man's mind, and when the same thought occurs to another man it is the key to that era. Every reform was once a private opinion, and when it shall be a private opinion again it will solve the problem of the age.—*Essays: History.*

The Stranger

SEE, IN ANY HOUSE where virtue and self-respect abide, the palpitation which the approach of a stranger causes. A commended stranger is expected and announced, and an uneasiness betwixt pleasure and pain invades all the hearts of a household. His arrival almost brings fear to the good hearts that would welcome him. The house is dusted, all things fly into their places, the old coat is exchanged for the new, and they must get up a dinner if they can. Of a commended stranger, only the good report is told by others, only the good and new is heard by us. He stands to us for humanity. He is what we wish. Having imagined and invested him, we ask how we should stand related in conversation and action with such a man, and are uneasy with fear. The same idea exalts conversation with him. We talk better than we are wont. We have the nimblest fancy, a richer memory, and our dumb devil has taken leave for the time. For long hours we can continue a series of sincere, graceful, rich communications, drawn from the oldest, secretest experience, so that they who sit by, of our own kinsfolk and acquaintance, shall feel a lively surprise at our unusual powers. But as soon as the stranger begins to intrude his partialities, his definitions, his defects into the conversation, it is all over. He has heard the first, the last and best he will ever hear from us. He is no stranger now. Vulgarly, ignor-

ance, misapprehension are old acquaintances. Now when he comes, he may get the order, the dress, and the dinner,—but the throbbing of the heart and the communications of the soul, no more.—*Essays: Friendship.*

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

The Play of Fancy

WE LIVE BY OUR IMAGINATIONS, by our admirations, by our sentiments. The child walks amid heaps of illusions, which he does not like to have disturbed. The boy, how sweet to him is his fancy! how dear the story of barons and battles! What a hero he is, whilst he feeds on his heroes! What a debt is his to imaginative books! He has no better friend or influence than Scott, Shakespeare, Plutarch, and Homer. The man lives to other objects, but who dare affirm that they are more real? Even the prose of the streets is full of refractions. In the life of the dreariest alderman, fancy enters into all details, and colors them with rosy hue. He imitates the air and actions of people whom he admires, and is raised in his own eyes. He pays a debt quicker to a rich man than to a poor man. He wishes the bow and compliment of some leader in the state, or in society; weighs what he says; perhaps he never comes nearer to him for that, but dies at last better contented for this amusement of his eyes and his fancy.—*Essays: Illusions.*

Disaster

WHAT OPTUM is instilled into all disaster! It shows formidable as we approach it, but there is at last no rough rasping friction, but the most slippery sliding surfaces; we fall soft on a thought; *Ate Dea* is gentle,

Over men's heads walking aloft,

With tender feet treading so soft.

People grieve and bemoan themselves, but it is not half so bad with them as they say. There are moods in which we court suffering, in the hope that here at least we shall find reality, sharp peaks and edges of truth. But it turns out to be scene-painting and counterfeit. The only thing grief has taught me is to know how shallow it is. That, like all the rest, plays about the surface, and never introduces me into the reality, for contact with which we would even pay the costly price of sons and lovers. Was it Boscovich who found that bodies never come in contact? Well, souls never touch their objects. An innavigable sea washes with silent waves between us and the things we aim at and converse with. Grief too will make us idealists. In the death of my son, now more than two years ago, I seem to have lost a beautiful estate,—no more. I cannot get it nearer to me. If tomorrow I should be informed of the bankruptcy of my principal debtors, the loss of my property would be a great inconvenience to me, perhaps, for many years; but it would

leave me as it found me,—neither better nor worse. So is it with this calamity; it does not touch me; something which I fancied was a part of me, which could not be torn away without tearing me, nor enlarged without enriching me, falls off from me and leaves no scar. It was caducous. I grieve that grief can teach me nothing, nor carry me one step into real nature. The Indian who was laid under a curse that the wind should not blow on him, nor water flow to him, nor fire burn him, is a type of us all. The dearest events are summer-rain, and we the Paracots that shed every drop. Nothing is left us now but death. We look to that with a grim satisfaction, saying, There at least is reality that will not dodge us.—*Essays: Experience.*

What Peace Demands

THE CAUSE OF PEACE is not the cause of cowardice. If peace is sought to be defended or preserved for the safety of the luxurious and the timid it is a sham, and the peace will be base. War is better, and the peace will be broken. If peace is to be maintained it must be by brave men who have come up to the same height as the hero, namely, the will to carry their life in their hand and stake it at any instant for their principle, but who have gone one step beyond the hero and will not seek another man's life—men who have, by their intellectual insight or else by their moral elevation, attained such a perception of their own, intrinsic worth that they do not think property or their own body a sufficient good to be saved by such dereliction of principle as treating a man like a sheep.—*Miscellanies*.

Our Illusions

THERE ARE DECEPTIONS of the senses, deceptions of the passions, and the structural, beneficent illusions of sentiment and the intellect. There is the illusion of love, which attributes to the beloved person all which that person shares with his or her family, sex, age, or condition, nay, with the human mind itself. 'Tis these which the lover loves, and Anna Matilda gets the credit of them. As if one shut up always in a tower, with one window, through which the face of heaven and earth could be seen, should fancy that all the marvels he beheld belonged to that window. There is the illusion of time, which is very deep; who has disposed of it? or come to the conviction that what seems the succession of thought is only the distribution of wholes into casual series? The intellect sees that every atom carries the whole of Nature; that the mind opens to omnipotence; that, in the endless striving and ascents, the metamorphosis is entire, so that the soul doth not know itself in its own act, when that act is perfected. There is illusion that shall deceive even the elect. There is illusion that shall deceive even the performer of the miracle. Though he make his body, he denies that he makes it. Though the world exist from thought, thought is daunted in presence of the world. One after the other we accept the mental laws, still resisting those which follow, which however must be accepted. But all our

concessions only compel us to new profusion. And what avails it that science has come to treat space and time as simply forms of thought, and the "material world" as hypothetical, and withal our pretension of property and even of self-hood are fading with the rest, if, at last, even our thoughts are not finalities; but the incessant flowing and ascension reach these also, and each thought which yesterday was a finality, today is yielding to a larger generalization?—*Essays: Illusions.*

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

World Forever New

CONSIDER THAT the perpetual admonition of Nature to us is, The world is new, untried. Do not believe the past. I give you the universe new and unhandled every hour. You think in your idle hours that there is literature, history, science behind you so accumulated as to exhaust thought and prescribe your own future and the future. In your sane hour you shall see that not a line has yet been written; that for all the poetry that is in the world your first sensation on entering a wood or standing on the shore of a lake has not been chanted yet. It remains for you, so does all thought, all object, all life remains unwritten still.

And yet for all this it must be owned that literature has truly told us that the cock crows in the mornings.—*Journals, June 13, 1838.*

Shifting Moods

WE CANNOT WRITE the order of the variable winds. How can we penetrate the law of our shifting moods and susceptibility? Yet they differ as all and nothing. Instead of the firmament of yesterday, which our eyes require, it is today an eggshell which coops us in; we cannot even see what or where our stars of destiny are. From day to day, the capital facts of human life are hidden from our eyes. Suddenly the mist rolls up, and reveals them, and we think how much good time is gone, that might have been saved had any hint of these things been shown. A sudden rise in the road shows us the system of mountains, and all the summits, which have been just as near us all the year, but quite out of mind. But these alternations are not without their order, and we are parties to our various fortune. If life seem a succession of dreams, yet poetic justice is done in dreams also. The visions of good men are good; it is the undisciplined will that is whipped with bad thoughts and bad fortunes. When we break the laws, we lose our hold on the central reality. Like sick men in hospitals, we change only from bed to bed, from one folly to another; and it cannot signify much what becomes of such castaways,—wailing, stupid, comatose creatures,—lifted from bed to bed, from the nothing of life to the nothing of death.—*Essays: Illusions.*

Riches and Poverty

ONE WOULD THINK from the talk of men, that riches and poverty were a great matter; and our civilization mainly respects it. But the Indians say, that they do not think the white man with his brow of care, always toiling, afraid of heat and cold, and keeping within doors, has any advantage of them. The permanent interest of every man is, never to be in a false position, but to have the weight of Nature to back him in all that he does. Riches and poverty are a thick or thin costume; and our life—the life of all of us—identical. For we transcend the circumstance continually, and taste the real quality of existence; as in our employments, which only differ in the manipulations, but express the same laws; or in our thoughts, which wear no silks and taste no ice-creams. We see God face to face every hour, and know the savor of Nature.—*Essays: Illusions.*

Thoreau

IT WAS A PLEASURE and a privilege to walk with him. He knew the country like a fox or a bird, and passed through it as freely by paths of his own. He knew every track in the snow or on the ground, and what creature had taken this path before him. One must submit abjectly to such a guide, and the reward was great. Under his arm he carried an old music-book to press plants; in his pocket, his diary and pencil, a spyglass for birds, microscope, jack-knife, and twine. He wore a straw hat, stout shoes, strong gray trousers, to brave shrub-oaks and smilax, and to climb a tree for a hawk's or a squirrel's nest. He waded into the pool for the water-plants, and his strong legs were no insignificant part of his armor. On the day I speak of he looked for the *Menyanthes*, detected it across the wide pool, and, on examination of the florets, decided that it had been in flower five days. He drew out of his breast-pocket his diary, and read the names of all the plants that should bloom on this day, whereof he kept account as a banker when his notes fall due. The *Cypripedium* not due till to-morrow. He thought, that, if waked up from a trance, in this swamp, he could tell by the plants what time of the year it was within two days. The redstart was flying about, and presently the fine grosbeaks, whose brilliant scarlet makes the rash gazer wipe his eye, and whose fine clear note Thoreau com-

pared to that of a tanager which has got rid of its hoarseness. Presently he heard a note which he called that of the night-warbler, a bird "he had never identified, had been in search of twelve years, which always, when he saw it, was in the act of diving down into a tree or bush, and which it was vain to seek; the only bird which sings indifferently by night and by day." I told him he must beware of finding and booking it, lest life should have nothing more to show him. He said, "What you seek in vain for, half your life, one day you come full upon, all the family at dinner. You seek it like a dream, and as soon as you find it you become its prey."—*Thoreau*.

Heroism

THE CHARACTERISTIC OF HEROISM is its persistency. All men have wandering impulses, fits and starts of generosity. But when you have chosen your part, abide by it, and do not weakly try to reconcile yourself with the world. The heroic cannot be the common, nor the common the heroic. Yet we have the weakness to expect the sympathy of people in those actions whose excellence is that they outrun sympathy, and appeal to a tardy justice. If you would serve your brother, because it is fit for you to serve him, do not take back your words when you find that prudent people do not commend you. Adhere to your own act, and congratulate yourself if you have done something strange and extravagant, and broken the monotony of a decorous age. It was a high counsel that I once heard given to a young person, 'Always do what you are afraid to do.' A simple, manly character need never make an apology, but should regard its past action with the calmness of Phocion, when he admitted that the event of the battle was happy, yet did not regret his dissuasion from the battle.—*Essays: Heroism.*

Self-Trust

SELF-TRUST is the essence of heroism. It is the state of the soul at war, and its ultimate objects are the last defiance of falsehood and wrong, and the power to bear all that can be inflicted by evil agents. It speaks the truth, and it is just, generous, hospitable, temperate, scornful of petty calculations, and scornful of being scorned. It persists; it is of an undaunted boldness, and of a fortitude not to be wearied out. Its jest is the littleness of common life. That false prudence which dotes on health and wealth is the butt and merriment of heroism. Heroism, like Plotinus, is almost ashamed of its body. What shall it say, then, to the sugar-plums and cat's cradles, to the toilet, compliments, quarrels, cards, and custard, which rack the wit of all society? What joys has kind nature provided for us dear creatures! There seems to be no interval between greatness and meanness. When the spirit is not master of the world, then it is its dupe. Yet the little man takes the great hoax so innocently, works in it so headlong and believing, is born red, and dies grey, arranging his toilet, attending on his own health, laying traps for sweet food and strong wine, setting his heart on a horse or a rifle, made happy with a little gossip or a little praise, that the great soul cannot choose but laugh at such earnest nonsense.—*Essays: Heroism.*

A Defence of Frankness

SOME OF MY FRIENDS have complained that we discussed Fate, Power, and Wealth on too low a platform; gave too much line to the evil spirit of the times; too many cakes to Cerberus; that we ran Cudworth's risk of making, by excess of candour, the argument of atheism so strong, that we could not answer it. I have no fears of being forced in my own despite to play, as we say, the devil's attorney. I have no infirmity of faith; no belief that it is of much importance what I or any man may say: I am sure that a certain truth will be said through me, though I should be dumb, or though I should try to say the reverse. Nor do I fear scepticism for any good soul. A just thinker will allow full swing to his scepticism. I dip my pen in the blackest ink, because I am not afraid of falling into my inkpot. I have no sympathy with a poor man I knew, who, when suicides abounded, told me he dared not look at his razor. We are of different opinions at different hours, but we always may be said to be at heart on the side of truth.

I see not why we should give ourselves such sanctified airs. If the Divine Providence has hid from men neither disease, nor deformity, nor corrupt society, but has stated itself out in passions, in war, in trade, in the love of power and pleasure, in hunger and need, in tyrannies, literatures, and arts,—let us not be

so nice that we cannot write these facts down coarsely as they stand, or doubt but there is a counter-statement as ponderous, which we can arrive at, and which, being put, will make all square. The solar system has no anxiety about its reputation, and the credit of truth and honesty is as safe; nor have I any fear that a sceptical bias can be given by leaning hard on the sides of fate, of practical power, or of trade, which the doctrine of Faith cannot downweigh. The strength of that principle is not measured in ounces and pounds: it tyrannizes at the centre of Nature.—*Conduct of Life: Worship.*

Companionship

IT CONTRIBUTES GREATLY towards a man's moral and intellectual health, to be brought into habits of companionship with individuals unlike himself, who care little for his pursuits, and whose sphere and abilities he must go out of himself to appreciate. The accidents of my life have often afforded me this advantage, but never with more fullness and variety than during my continuance in office. There was one man, especially, the observation of whose character gave me a new idea of talent. His gifts were emphatically those of a man of business; prompt, acute, clear-minded; with an eye that saw through all perplexities, and a faculty of arrangement that made them vanish, as by the waving of an enchanter's wand. Bred up from boyhood in the Custom House, it was his proper field of activity; and the many intricacies of business, so harassing to the interloper, presented themselves before him with the regularity of a perfectly comprehended system. In my contemplation, he stood as the ideal of his 'class. He was, indeed, the Custom House in himself, or, at all events, the main-spring that kept its variously revolving wheels in motion; for, in an institution like this, where its officers are appointed to subserve their own profit and convenience, and seldom with a leading reference to their fitness for the duty to be performed, they must perforce seek elsewhere the dexterity which is not in

them. Thus, by an inevitable necessity, as a magnet attracts steel-filings, so did our man of business draw to himself the difficulties which everybody met with. With an easy condescension, and kind forbearance towards our stupidity,—which, to his order of mind, must have seemed little short of crime,—would be forthwith, by the merest touch of his finger, make the incomprehensible as clear as daylight. The merchants valued him not less than we, his esoteric friends. His integrity was perfect: it was a law of nature with him, rather than a choice or a principle; nor can it be otherwise than the main condition of an intellect so remarkably clear and accurate as his, to be honest and regular in the administration of affairs. A stain on his conscience, as to anything that came within the range of his vocation, would trouble such a man very much in the same way, though to a far greater degree, than an error in the balance of an account, or an ink-blot on the fair page of a book or record. Here, in a word,—and it is a rare instance in my life—I had met with a person thoroughly adapted to the situation which he held.—*The Custom House.*

The Passion for Equality

THERE IS, IN FACT, a manly and lawful passion for equality that incites men to wish all to be powerful and honored. This passion tends to elevate the humble to the rank of the great; but there exists also in the human heart a depraved taste for equality, which impels the weak to attempt to lower the powerful to their own level and reduces men to prefer equality in slavery to inequality in freedom. Not that those nations whose social condition is democratic naturally despise liberty; on the contrary, they have an instinctive love of it. But liberty is not the chief and constant object of their desires; equality is their idol; they make rapid and sudden efforts to obtain liberty and, if they miss their aim, resign themselves to their disappointment; but nothing can satisfy them without equality, and they would rather perish than lose it.

On the other hand, in a state where the citizens are all practically equal, it becomes difficult for them to preserve their independence against the aggressions of power. No one among them being strong enough to engage in the struggle alone with advantage, nothing but a general combination can protect their liberty.—*Democracy in America*. (Translated by Henry Reeve.)

Liberty of the Individual

THERE IS A SPHERE of action in which society, as distinguished from the individual, has, if any, only an indirect interest; comprehending all that portion of a person's life and conduct which affects only himself, or if it also affects others, only with their free, voluntary, and undeceived consent and participation. When I say only himself, I mean directly, and in the first instance: for whatever affects himself may affect others through himself; and the objection which may be grounded on this contingency, will receive consideration in the sequel. This, then, is the appropriate region of human liberty. It comprises, first, the inward domain of consciousness; demanding liberty of conscience, in the most comprehensive sense; liberty of thought and feeling; absolute freedom of opinion and sentiment on all subjects, practical or speculative, scientific, moral, or theological. The liberty of expressing and publishing opinions may seem to fall under a different principle, since it belongs to that part of the conduct of an individual which concerns other people; but, being almost of as much importance as the liberty of thought itself, and resting in great part on the same reasons, is practically inseparable from it. Secondly, the principle requires liberty of tastes and pursuits; of framing the plan of our life to suit our own character; of doing as we like, subject to such consequences as may

follow: without impediment from our fellow creatures, so long as what we do does not harm them, even though they should think our conduct foolish, perverse, or wrong. Thirdly, from this liberty of each individual, follows the liberty, within the same limits, of combination among individuals; freedom to unite, for any purpose not involving harm to others: the persons combining being supposed to be of full age, and not forced or deceived.

No society in which these liberties are not, on the whole, respected, is free, whatever may be its form of government; and never is completely free in which they do not exist absolute and unqualified.—*On Liberty.*

The Triumph of Truth

THE DICTUM that truth always triumphs over persecution, is one of those pleasant falsehoods which men repeat after one another till they pass into commonplaces, but which all experience refutes. History teems with instances of truth put down by persecution. If not suppressed forever, it may be thrown back for centuries. To speak only of religious opinions: the Reformation broke out at least twenty times before Luther, and was put down. . . . Even after the era of Luther, wherever persecution was persisted in, it was successful. In Spain, Italy, Flanders, the Austrian Empire, Protestantism was rooted out; and most likely, would have been so in England, had Queen Mary lived, or Queen Elizabeth died. Persecution has always succeeded, save where the heretics were too strong a party to be effectually persecuted. No reasonable person can doubt that Christianity might have been extirpated in the Roman Empire. It spread, and became predominant, because the persecutions were only occasional, lasting but a short time, and separated by long intervals of almost undisturbed propagandism. It is a piece of idle sentimentality that truth, merely as truth, has any inherent power denied to error, of prevailing against the dungeon and the stake. Men are not more zealous for truth than they often are for error, and a sufficient application of legal or even of social pen-

alties will generally succeed in stopping the propagation of either. The real advantage which truth has, consists in this, that when an opinion is true, it may be extinguished once, twice, or many times, but in the course of ages there will generally be found persons to rediscover it, until some one of its reappearances falls on a time when from favourable circumstances it escapes persecution until it has made such head as to withstand all subsequent attempts to suppress it.—*On Liberty.*

JOHN STUART MILL

Individual and State

THE WORTH of a State, in the long run, is the worth of the individuals composing it; and a State which postpones the interests of *their* mental expansion and elevation, to a little more of administrative skill, or that semblance of it which practice gives, in the details of business; a State which dwarfs its men, in order that they may be more docile instruments in its hands even for beneficial purposes, will find that with small men no great thing can really be accomplished; and that the perfection of machinery to which it has sacrificed everything, will in the end avail it nothing, for want of the vital power which, in order that the machine might work more smoothly it has preferred to banish.—*On Liberty.*

The Pursuit of Wisdom

WHEN WE CONSIDER either the history of opinion, or the ordinary conduct of human life, to what is to be ascribed that the one and the others are no worse than they are? Not certainly to the inherent force of the human understanding; for, on any matter not self-evident, there are ninety-nine persons totally incapable of judging it, for one who is capable; and the capacity of the hundredth person is only comparative; for the majority of the eminent men of every past generation held many opinions now known to be erroneous, and did or approved numerous things which no one will now justify. Why is it, then, that there is on the whole a preponderance among mankind of rational opinions and rational conduct? If there really is this preponderance—which there must be, unless human affairs are, and have always been, in an almost desperate state—it is owing to a quality of the human mind, the source of everything respectable in man either as an intellectual or as a moral being, namely, that his errors are corrigible. He is capable of rectifying his mistakes, by discussion and experience. Not by experience alone. There must be discussion, to show how experience is to be interpreted. Wrong opinions and practices gradually yield to fact and argument: but facts and arguments, to produce any effect on the mind, must be brought before it. Very few facts are able to tell their own story,

without comments to bring out their meaning. The whole strength and value, then, of human judgment, depending on the one property, that it can be set right when it is wrong, reliance can be placed on it only when the means of setting it right are kept constantly at hand. In the case of any person whose judgment is really deserving of confidence, how has it become so? Because he has kept his mind open to criticism of his opinions and conduct. Because it has been his practice to listen to all that could be said against him; to profit by as much of it as was just, and expound to himself, and upon occasion to others, the fallacy of what was fallacious. Because he has felt, that the only way in which a human being can make some approach to knowing the whole of a subject, is by hearing what can be said about it by persons of every variety of opinion, and studying all modes in which it can be looked at by every character of mind. No wise man ever acquired his wisdom in any other manner.—*On Liberty*.

Man the Individual

HE WHO LETS THE WORLD, or his own portion of it, choose his plan of life for him, has no need of any other faculty than the ape-like one of imitation. He who chooses his plan for himself employs all his faculties. He must use observation to see, reasoning and judgment to foresee, activity to gather materials for decision, discrimination to decide, and when he has decided, firmness and self-control to hold to his deliberate decision. And these qualities he requires and exercises exactly in proportion as the part of his conduct which he determines according to his own judgment and feelings is a large one. It is possible that he might be guided in some good path, and kept out of harm's way, without any of these things. But what will be his comparative worth as a human being? It really is of importance, not only what men do, but what manner of men they are that do it. Among the works of man, which human life is rightly employed in perfecting and beautifying, the first in importance is surely man himself. Supposing it were possible to get houses built, corn grown, battles fought, causes tried, and even churches erected and prayers said, by machinery—by automatons in human form—it would be a considerable loss to exchange for these automatons even the men and women who at present inhabit the more civilized parts of the world, and who assuredly are but starved

specimens of what nature can and will produce. Human nature is not a machine to be built after a model, and set to do exactly the work prescribed for it, but a tree, which requires to grow and develop itself on all sides, according to the tendency of the inward forces which make it a living thing. — *On Liberty*.

The Gettysburg Address

FOURSCORE AND SEVEN YEARS AGO our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honoured dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

With Malice Toward None

THE ALMIGHTY has his own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through his appointed time, he now wills to remove, and that he gives to both North and South this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to him? Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations.—*Second Inaugural Address.*

Meeting with Friends

I HAVE CERTAIN FRIENDS whom I visit occasionally, but I commonly part from them early with a certain bitter-sweet sentiment. That which we love is so mixed and entangled with that we hate in one another that we are more grieved and disappointed, aye, and estranged from one another, by meeting than by absence. Some men may be my acquaintances merely, but one whom I have been accustomed to regard, to idealize, to have dreams about as a friend, and mix up intimately with myself, can never degenerate into an acquaintance. I must know him on that higher ground or not know him at all. We do not confess and explain, because we would fain be so intimately related as to understand each other without speech. Our friend must be broad. His must be an atmosphere coextensive with the universe, in which we can expand and breathe. For the most part we are smothered and stifled by one another. I go and see my friend and try his atmosphere. If our atmospheres do not mingle, if we repel each other strongly, it is of no use to stay.—*Journal, November 24, 1850.*

A Walk in the Woods

THERE IS NOTHING so sanative, so poetic, as a walk in the woods and fields even now, when I meet none abroad for pleasure. Nothing so inspires me and excites such serene and profitable thought. The objects are elevating. In the street and in society I am almost invariably mean. No amount of gold or respectability would in the least redeem it—dining with the Governor or a member of Congress! But alone in distant woods or fields, in unpretending sprout-lands or pastures tracked by rabbits, even in a bleak and, to most, cheerless day, like this, when a villager would be thinking of his inn, I come to myself, I once more feel myself grandly related, and that cold and solitude are friends of mine. I suppose that this value, in my case, is equivalent to what others get by churchgoing and prayer. I come to my solitary woodland walk as the homesick go home. I thus dispose of the superfluous and see things as they are, grand and beautiful. I have told many that I walk every day about half the daylight, but I think they do not believe it. I wish to get the Concord, the Massachusetts, the America, out of my head and be sane a part of every day. If there are missionaries for the heathen, why not send them to me? I wish to know something; I wish to be made better. I wish to forget, a considerable part of every day, all mean, narrow, trivial men (and this requires usually to forego and

forget all personal relations so long), and therefore I come out to these solitudes, where the problem of existence is simplified. I get away a mile or two from the town into the stillness and solitude of nature, with rocks, trees, weeds, snow about me. I enter some glade in the woods, perchance, where a few weeds and dry leaves alone lift themselves above the surface of the snow, and it is as if I had come to an open window. I see out and around myself. Our *skylights* are thus far away from the ordinary resorts of men. I am not satisfied with ordinary windows. I must have a true *skylight*.—*Journal, Jan. 7, 1857.*

Man In His Youth

WHEN A MAN IS YOUNG and his constitution and body have not acquired firmness, i.e., before he has arrived at middle age, he is not an assured inhabitant of the earth, and his compensation is that he is not quite earthy, there is something particularly tender and divine about him. His sentiments and his weakness, nay, his very sickness and the greater uncertainty of his fate, seem to ally him to a noble race of beings, to whom he in part belongs, or with whom he is in communication. The young man is a demigod; the grown man, alas! is commonly a mere mortal. He is but half here, he knows not the men of this world, the powers that be. They know him not. Prompted by the reminiscence of that other sphere from which he so lately arrived, his actions are unintelligible to his seniors. He bathes in light. He is interesting as a stranger from another sphere. He really thinks and talks about a larger sphere of existence than this world. It takes him forty years to accommodate himself to the carapax of this world. This is the age of poetry. Afterward he may be the president of a bank, and go the way of all flesh. But a man of settled views, whose thoughts are few and hardened like his bones, is truly mortal, and his only resource is to say his prayers.—*Journal*, Dec. 19, 1859.

Literary Style

THE SCHOLAR may be sure that he writes the tougher truth for the calluses on his palms. They give firmness to the sentence. Indeed, the mind never makes a great and successful effort, without a corresponding energy of the body. We are often struck by the force and precision of style to which hard-working men, unpracticed in writing, easily attain when required to make the effort. As if plainness and vigor and sincerity, the ornaments of style, were better learned on the farm and in the workshop than in the schools. The sentences written by such rude hands are nervous and tough, like hardened thongs, the sinews of the deer, or the roots of the pine. . . . Whose are the truly *labored* sentences? From the weak and flimsy periods of the politician and literary man, we are glad to turn even to the description of work, the simple record of the month's labor in the farmer's almanac, to restore our tone and spirits. A sentence should read as if its author, had he held a plow instead of a pen, could have drawn a furrow deep and straight to the end. The scholar requires hard and serious labor to give an impetus to his thought. He will learn to grasp the pen firmly so, and wield it gracefully and effectively, as an axe or a sword. When we consider the weak and nerveless periods of some literary men, who perchance in feet and inches come up to the standard of their race, and are not deficient

in girth also, we are amazed at the immense sacrifice of thews and sinews. What! these proportions, these bones—and this their work! Hands which could have felled an ox have hewed this fragile matter which would not have tasked a lady's fingers! Can this be a stalwart man's work, who has a marrow in his back and a tendon Achilles in his heel? They who set up the blocks of Stonehenge did somewhat, if they only laid out their strength for once, and stretched themselves. — *A Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers.*

Living Our Days

I AM ASTONISHED at the singular pertinacity and endurance of our lives. The miracle is, that what is *is*, when it is so difficult, if not impossible, for anything else to be; that we walk on in our particular paths so far, before we fall on death and fate, merely because we must walk in some path; that every man can get a living, and so few can do anything more. So much only can I accomplish ere health and strength are gone, and yet this suffices. The bird now sits just out of gunshot. I am never rich in money, and I am never meanly poor. If debts are incurred, why, debts are in the course of events canceled, as it were, by the same law by which they were incurred. I heard that an engagement was entered into between a certain youth and a maiden, and then I heard that it was broken off, but I did not know the reason in either case. We are hedged about, we think, by accident and circumstance; now we creep as in a dream, and now again we run, as if there were a fate in it, and all things thwarted or assisted. I cannot change my clothes but when I do, and yet I do change them, and soil the new ones. It is wonderful that this gets done, when some admirable deeds which I could mention do not get done. Our particular lives seem of such fortune and confident strength and durability as piers of solid rock thrown forward into the tide of circumstance. When every

other path would fail, with singular and unerring confidence we advance on our particular course. What risks we run! famine and fire and pestilence, and the thousand forms of a cruel fate—and yet every man lives till he—dies. How did he manage that? Is there no immediate danger? We wonder superfluously when we hear of a somnambulist walking a plank securely—we have walked a plank all our lives up to this particular string-piece where we are. My life will wait for nobody, but is being matured still without delay, while I go about the streets, and chaffer with this man and that to secure it a living. It is as indifferent and easy meanwhile as a poor man's dog, and making acquaintance with its kind. It will cut its own channel like a mountain stream, and by the longest ridge is not kept from the sea at last.—
A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers.

Dreams and Reality

I DREAMED THIS NIGHT of an event which had occurred long before. It was a difference with a Friend, which had not ceased to give me pain, though I had no cause to blame myself. But in my dream ideal justice was at length done me for his suspicions, and I received that compensation which I have never obtained in my waking hours. I was unspeakably soothed and rejoiced, even after I awoke, because in dreams we never deceive ourselves, nor are deceived, and this seemed to have the authority of a final judgment.

We bless and curse ourselves. Some dreams are divine, as well as some waking thoughts. Donne sings of one

'Who dreamt devoutlier than most used to pray.'

Dreams are the touchstones of our characters. We are scarcely less afflicted when we remember some unworthiness in our conduct in a dream, than if it had been actual, and the intensity of our grief, which is our atonement, measures the degree by which this is separated from an actual unworthiness. For in dreams we but act a part which must have been learned and rehearsed in our waking hours, and no doubt could discover some waking consent thereto. If this meanness had not its foundation in us, why are we grieved at it? In dreams we see ourselves naked and acting out our real characters, even more

clearly than we see others awake. But an unwavering and commanding virtue would compel even its most fantastic and faintest dreams to respect its ever-wakeful authority; as we are accustomed to say carelessly, we should never have *dreamed* of such a thing. Our truest life is when we are in dreams awake.—
A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers.

Experience

THE MASS of men lead lives of quiet desperation. What is called resignation is confirmed desperation. From the desperate city you go into the desperate country, and have to console yourself with the bravery of minks and muskrats. A stereotyped but unconscious despair is concealed even under what are called the games and amusements of mankind. There is no play in them, for this comes after work. But it is a characteristic of wisdom not to do desperate things.

When we consider what, to use the words of the catechism, is the chief end of man, and what are the true necessities and means of life, it appears as if men had deliberately chosen the common mode of living because they preferred it to any other. Yet they honestly think there is no choice left. But alert and healthy natures remember that the sun rose clear. It is never too late to give up our prejudices. No way of thinking or doing, however ancient, can be trusted without proof. What everybody echoes or in silence passes by as true today may turn out to be falsehood tomorrow, mere smoke of opinion, which some had trusted for a cloud that would sprinkle fertilizing rain on their fields. What old people say you cannot do, you try and find that you can. Old deeds for old people, and new deeds for new. Old people did not know enough once, perchance, to fetch

fresh fuel to keep the fire a-going; new people put a little dry wood under a pot, and are whirled around the globe with the speed of birds, in a way to kill old people, as the phrase is. Age is no better, hardly so well, qualified for an instructor as youth, for it has not profited so much as it has lost. One may almost doubt if the wisest man has learned anything of absolute value by living. Practically, the old have no very important advice to give the young, their own experience has been so partial, and their lives have been such miserable failures, for private reasons, as they must believe; and it may be that they have some faith left which belies that experience, and they are only less young than they were. I have lived some thirty years on this planet, and I have yet to hear the first syllable of valuable earnest advice from my seniors. They have told me nothing, and probably cannot tell me anything to the purpose. Here is life, an experiment to a great extent untried by me; but it does not avail me that they have tried it. If I have any experience which I think valuable, I am sure to reflect that this my Mentors said nothing about.—*Walden*.

Philanthropy

THERE IS NO ODOR so bad as that which arises from goodness tainted. It is human, it is divine, carrion. If I knew for a certainty that a man was coming to my house with a conscious design of doing me good, I should run for my life, as from that dry and parching wind of the African deserts called the simoon, which fills the mouth and nose and ears and eyes with dust till you are suffocated, for fear that I should get some of his good done to me—some of its virus mingled with my blood. No—in this case I would rather suffer evil the natural way. A man is not a good *man* to me because he will feed me if I should be starving, or warm me if I should be freezing, or pull me out of a ditch if I should ever fall into one. I can find you a Newfoundland dog that will do as much. Philanthropy is not love for one's fellow-man in the broadest sense. . . . I would not subtract anything from the praise that is due to philanthropy, but merely demand justice for all who by their lives and works are a blessing to mankind. I do not value chiefly a man's uprightness and benevolence, which are, as it were, his stem and leaves. Those plants of whose greenness withered we make herb tea for the sick serve but a humble use, and are most employed by quacks. I want the flower and fruit of a man; that some fragrance be wafted over from him to me, and some ripeness flavor our intercourse. His goodness must not be a partial and transitory act, but a constant superfluity, which costs him nothing and of

which he is unconscious. This is a charity that hides a multitude of sins. The philanthropist too often surrounds mankind with the remembrance of his own castoff griefs as an atmosphere, and calls it sympathy. We should impart our courage, and not our despair, our health and ease, and not our disease, and take care that this does not spread by contagion. From what southern plains comes up the voice of wailing? Under what latitudes reside the heathen to whom we would send light? Who is that intemperate and brutal man whom we would redeem? If anything ail a man, so that he does not perform his functions, if he have a pain in his bowels even—for that is the seat of sympathy—he forthwith sets about reforming—the world. Being a microcosm himself, he discovers—and it is a true discovery, and he is the man to make it—that the world has been eating green apples; to his eyes, in fact, the globe itself is a great green apple, which there is danger awful to think of that the children of men will nibble before it is ripe: and straightway his drastic philanthropy seeks out the Esquimau and the Patagonian, and embraces the populous Indian and Chinese villages; and thus, by a few years of philanthropic activity, the powers in the meanwhile using him for their own ends, no doubt, he cures himself of his dyspepsia, the globe acquires a faint blush on one or both of its cheeks, as if it were beginning to be ripe, and life loses its crudity and is once more sweet and wholesome to live. I never dreamed of any enormity greater than I have committed. I never knew, and never shall know, a worse man than myself.—*Walden.*

The Ruts of Tradition

I WENT TO THE WOODS because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practise resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion. For most men, it appears to me, are in a strange uncertainty about it, whether it is of the devil or of God, and have *somewhat hastily* concluded that it is the chief end of man here to 'glorify God and enjoy him forever.'

* * *

I left the woods for as good a reason as I went there. Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live, and could not spare any more time for that one. It is remarkable how easily and insensibly we fall into a particular route, and make a beaten track for ourselves. I had not lived there a

week before my feet wore a path from my door to the pond-side; and though it is five or six years since I trod it, it is still quite distinct. It is true, I fear, that others may have fallen into it, and so helped to keep it open. The surface of the earth is soft and impressible by the feet of men; and so with the paths which the mind travels. How worn and dusty, then, must be the highways of the world, how deep the ruts of tradition and conformity!—*Walden.*

Morning Air

WHAT IS THE PILL which will keep us well, serene, contented? Not my or the great-grandfather's, but our great-grandmother Nature's universal, vegetable, botanic medicines, by which she has kept herself young always, outlived so many old Parrs in her day, and fed her health with their decaying fatness. For my panacea, instead of one of those quack vials of a mixture dipped from Acheron and the Dead Sea, which come out of those long shallow black-schooner-looking wagons which we sometimes see made to carry bottles, let me have a draft of undiluted morning air. Morning air! If men will not drink of this at the fountain-head of the day, why, then, we must even bottle up some and sell it in the shops, for the benefit of those who have lost their subscription ticket to morning time in this world. But remember, it will not keep quite till noonday even in the coolest cellar, but drive out the stopples long ere that and follow westward the steps of Aurora. I am no worshiper of Hygeia, who was the daughter of that old herb-doctor Aesculapius, and who is represented on monuments holding a serpent in one hand, and in the other a cup out of which the serpent sometimes drinks; but rather of Hebe, cup-bearer to Jupiter, who was the daughter of Juno and wild lettuce, and who had the power of restoring gods and men to the vigor of youth. She was probably the only thorough-

ly sound-conditioned, healthy, and robust young lady that ever walked the globe, and wherever she came it was spring.—*Walden*.

Of Government

THE AUTHORITY OF GOVERNMENT, even such as I am willing to submit to,—for I will cheerfully obey those who know and can do better than I, and in many things even those who neither know nor can do so well,—is still an impure one: to be strictly just, it must have the sanction and consent of the governed. It can have no pure right over my person and property but what I concede to it. The progress from an absolute to a limited monarchy, from a limited monarchy to a democracy, is a progress toward a true respect for the individual. Even the Chinese philosopher was wise enough to regard the individual as the basis of the empire. Is a democracy, such as we know it, the last improvement possible in government? Is it not possible to take a step further towards recognizing and organizing the rights of man? There will never be a really free and enlightened State, until the State comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived, and treats him accordingly. I please myself with imagining a State at last which can afford to be just to all men, and to treat the individual with respect as a neighbor; which even would not think it inconsistent with its own repose, if a few were to live aloof from it, not meddling with it, nor embraced by it, who fulfilled all the duties of neighbors and fellow-men. A State

which bore this kind of fruit, and suffered it to drop off as fast as it ripened, would prepare the way for a still more perfect and glorious State, which also I have imagined, but not yet anywhere seen.—*Civil Disobedience.*

Government in America

THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT,—what is it but a tradition, though a recent one, endeavoring to transmit itself unimpaired to posterity, but each instant losing some of its integrity? It has not the vitality and force of a single living man; for a single man can bend it to his will. It is a sort of wooden gun to the people themselves. But it is not the less necessary for this; for the people must have some complicated machinery or other, and hear its din, to satisfy that idea of government which they have. Governments show thus how successfully men can be imposed on, even impose on themselves, for their own advantage. It is excellent, we must all allow. Yet this government never of itself furthered any enterprise, but by the alacrity with which it got out of its way. *It* does not keep the country free. *It* does not settle the West. *It* does not educate. The character inherent in the American people has done all that has been accomplished; and it would have done somewhat more, if the government had not sometimes got in its way. For government is an expedient by which men would fain succeed in letting one another alone; and, as has been said, when it is most expedient, the governed are most let alone by it. Trade and commerce, if they were not made of India-rubber, would never manage to bounce over the obstacles which legislators are continually putting in their way; and, if one were to

judge these men wholly by the effects of their reactions and not partly by their intentions, they would deserve to be classed and punished with those mischievous persons who put obstructions on the railroads.—*Civil Disobedience.*

Living in the Present

ABOVE ALL, we cannot afford not to live in the present. He is blessed over all mortals who loses no moment of the passing life in remembering the past. Unless our philosophy hears the cock crow in every barn-yard within our horizon, it is belated. That sound commonly reminds us that we are growing rusty and antique in our employments and habits of thought. His philosophy comes down to a more recent time than ours. There is something suggested by it that is a newer testament—the gospel according to this moment. He has not fallen astern; he has got up early and kept up early, and to be where he is is to be in season, in the foremost rank of time. It is an expression of the health and soundness of nature, a brag for all the world,—healthiness as of a spring burst forth, a new fountain of the Muses, to celebrate this last instant of time. Where he lives no fugitive slave laws are passed. Who has not betrayed his master many times since last he heard that note?

The merit of this bird's strain is in its freedom from all plaintiveness. The singer can easily move us to tears or to laughter, but where is he who can excite in us a pure morning joy? When, in doleful dumps, breaking the awful stillness of our wooden sidewalk on a Sunday, or, perchance, a watcher in the house of mourning, I hear a cockerel crow far or near, I think to myself, 'There is one of us well, at any rate,'—and with a sudden gush return to my senses.—*Essays: Walking.*

Expectancy

THE LIFE in us is like the water in the river. It may rise this year higher than man has ever known it, and flood the parched uplands; even this may be the eventful year, which will drown out all our muskrats. It was not always dry land where we dwell. I see far inland the banks which the stream anciently washed, before science began to record its freshets. Every one has heard the story which has gone the rounds of New England, of a strong and beautiful bug which came out of the dry leaf of an old table of apple-tree wood, which had stood in a farmer's kitchen for sixty years, first in Connecticut, and afterward in Massachusetts—from an egg deposited in the living tree many years earlier still, as appeared by counting the annual layers beyond it; which was heard gnawing out for several weeks, hatched perchance by the heat of an urn. Who does not feel his faith in a resurrection and immortality strengthened by hearing of this? Who knows what beautiful and winged life, whose egg has been buried for ages under many concentric layers of woodenness in the dead dry life of society, deposited at first in the alburnum of the green and living tree, which has been gradually converted into the semblance of its well-seasoned tomb—heard perchance gnawing out now for years by the astonished family of man, as they sat round the festive board—may unexpectedly come forth from

amidst society's most trivial and handselled furniture, to enjoy its perfect summer life at last!

I do not say that John or Jonathan will realize this; but such is the character of that morrow which mere lapse of time can never make to dawn. The light which puts out our eyes is darkness to us. Only that day dawns to which we are awake. There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star.—*Walden*.

The Transition from Mediaevalism

FOR, INDEED, a change was coming upon the world, the meaning and direction of which even still is hidden from us, a change from era to era. The paths trodden by the footsteps of ages were broken up; old things were passing away, and the faith and the life of ten centuries were dissolving like a dream. Chivalry was dying; the abbey and the castle were soon together to crumble into ruins; and all the forms, desires, beliefs, convictions of the old world were passing away, never to return. A new continent had risen up beyond the western sea. The floor of heaven, inlaid with stars, had sunk back to an infinite abyss of immeasurable space; and the firm earth itself, unfixed from its foundations, was seen to be but a small atom in the awful vastness of the universe. In the fabric of habit in which they had so laboriously built for themselves, mankind were to remain no longer.

And now it is all gone—like an unsubstantial pageant faded; and between us and the old English there lies a gulf of mystery which the prose of the historian will never adequately bridge. They cannot come to us, and our imagination can but feebly penetrate to them. Only among the aisles of the cathedral, only as we gaze upon their silent figures sleeping on their tombs, some faint conceptions float before us of what these men were when they were alive; and perhaps in the sound of church bells, that peculiar creation of mediaeval age, which falls upon the ear like the echo of a vanished world.—*History of England.*

True Books

THE GOOD BOOK of the hour, then,—I do not speak of the bad ones,—is simply the useful or pleasant talk of some person whom you cannot otherwise converse with, printed for you. Very useful often, telling you what you need to know; very pleasant often, as a sensible friend's present talk would be. These bright accounts of travels; good-humoured and witty discussions of question; lively or pathetic story-telling in the form of novel; firm fact-telling, by the real agents concerned in the events of passing history;—all these books of the hour, multiplying among us as education becomes more general, are a peculiar possession of the present age; we ought to be entirely thankful for them, and entirely ashamed of ourselves if we make no good use of them. But we make the worst possible use if we allow them to usurp the place of true books; for, strictly speaking, they are not books at all, but merely letters or newspapers in good print. Our friend's letter may be delightful, or necessary, to-day; whether worth keeping or not, is to be considered. The newspaper may be entirely proper at breakfast time, but assuredly it is not reading for all day. So, though bound up in a volume, the long letter which gives you so pleasant an account of the inns, and roads, and weather, last year at such a place, or which tells you that amusing story, or gives you the real circumstances of such and such events, however valuable for occasional reference, may not be, in the real sense of the word, a 'book' at

all, nor, in the real sense, to be read. A book is essentially not a talking thing, but a written thing; and written, not with a view of mere communication, but of permanence. The book of talk is printed only because its author cannot speak to thousands of people at once; if he could, he would—the volume is mere multiplication of his voice. You cannot talk to your friend in India; if you could, you would; you write instead; that is mere conveyance of voice. But a book is written, not to multiply the voice merely, not to carry it merely, but to perpetuate it. The author has something to say which he perceives to be true and useful, or helpfully beautiful. So far as he knows, no one has yet said it; so far as he knows, no one else can say it. He is bound to say it, clearly and melodiously if he may; clearly at all events. In the sum of his life he finds this to be the thing, or group of things, manifest to him;—this, the piece of true knowledge, or sight which his share of sunshine and earth has permitted him to seize. He would fain set it down for ever; engrave it on rock, if he could; saying, ‘This is the best of me; for the rest, I ate, and drank, and slept, loved, and hated, like another; my life was as the vapour, and is not; but this I saw and knew; this, if anything of mine, is worth your memory.’ That is his ‘writing’; it is, in his small human way, and with whatever degree of true inspiration is in him, his inscription, or scripture. That is a ‘Book.’—*Sesame and Lilies*.

Man's Best Wisdom

VERY READY WE ARE to say of a book, 'How good this is—that's exactly what I think!' But the right feeling is, 'How strange that is! I never thought of that before, and yet I see it is true; or if I do not now, I hope I shall some day.' But whether thus submissively or not, at least be sure that you go to the author to get at his meaning, not to find yours. Judge it afterwards if you think yourself qualified to do so; but ascertain it first. And be sure, also, if the author is worth anything, that you will not get at his meaning all at once;—nay, that at his whole meaning you will not for a long time arrive in any wise. Not that he does not say what he means, and in strong words too; but he cannot say it all; and what is more strange, will not, but in a hidden way and in parables, in order that he may be sure you want it. I cannot quite see the reason of this, nor analyse that cruel reticence in the breasts of wise men which makes them always hide their deeper thought. They do not give it you by way of help, but of reward; and will make themselves sure that you deserve it before they allow you to reach it. But it is the same with the physical type of wisdom, gold. There seems, to you and me, no reason why the electric forces of the earth should not carry whatever there is of gold within it at once to the mountain tops, so that kings and people might know that all the gold they could get was there; and with-

out any trouble of digging, or anxiety, or chance, or waste of time, cut it away, and coin as much as they needed. But Nature does not manage it so. She puts it in little fissures in the earth, nobody knows where; you may dig long and find none; you must dig painfully to find any.

And it is just the same with men's best wisdom. When you come to a good book, you must ask yourself, 'Am I inclined to work as an Australian miner would? Are my pickaxes and shovels in good order, and am I in good trim myself, my sleeves well up to the elbow, and my breath good, and my temper?' And, keeping the figure a little longer, even at cost of tiresomeness, for it is a thoroughly useful one, the metal you are in search of being the author's mind or meaning, his words are as the rock which you have to crush and smelt in order to get at it. And your pickaxes are your own care, wit, and learning; your smelting furnace is your own thoughtful soul. Do not hope to get at any good author's meaning without those tools and that fire; often you will need sharpest, finest chiselling, and patientest fusing, before you can gather one grain of the metal.—*Sesame and Lilies*.

The Oaks and I

I WRITE THIS, 11 a.m., shelter'd under a dense oak by the bank, where I have taken refuge from a sudden rain. I came down here, (we had sulky drizzles all the morning, but an hour ago a lull,) for the before-mention'd daily and simple exercise I am fond of—to pull on that young hickory sapling out there—to sway and yield to its tough-limber upright stem—haply to get into my old sinews some of its elastic fiber and clear sap. . . . I hold on to boughs or slender trees caressingly there in the sun and shade, wrestle with their innocent stalwartness—and *know* the virtue thereof passes from them into me. . . .

But now pleasantly imprison'd here under the big oak—the rain dripping, and the sky cover'd with leaden clouds—nothing but the pond on one side, and the other a spread of grass, spotted with the milky blossoms of the wild carrot—the sound of an axe wielded at some distant woodpile—yet in this dull scene, (as most folks would call it,) why am I so (almost) happy here and alone? Why would any intrusion, even from people I like, spoil the charm? But am I alone? Doubtless there comes a time—perhaps it has come to me—when one feels through his whole being, and pronouncedly the emotional part, that identity between himself subjectively and Nature objectively which Schelling and Fichte are so fond of pressing. How it is I know not, but I often realize a presence here—in clear moods I am certain of it, and neither chemistry nor reasoning nor aes-

thetics will give the least explanation. All the past two summers it has been strengthening and nourishing my sick body and soul, as never before. Thanks, invisible physician, for thy silent, delicious medicine, thy day and night, thy waters and thy airs, the oaks, the grass, the trees, and e'en the weeds!—*Specimen Days*.

WALT WHITMAN

Literature and the People

LITERATURE, strictly considered, has never recognized the People, and, whatever may be said, does not today. Speaking generally, the tendencies of literature, as hitherto pursued, have been to make mostly critical and querulous men. It seems as if, so far, there were some natural repugnance between a literary and professional life, and the rude rank spirit of the democracies. There is, in later literature, a treatment of benevolence, a charity business, rife enough it is true; but I know nothing more rare, even in this country, than a fit scientific estimate and reverent appreciation of the People—of their measureless wealth of latent power and capacity, their vast, artistic contrasts of lights and shades—with, in America, their entire reliability in emergencies, and a certain breadth of historic grandeur, of peace or war, far surpassing all the vaunted samples of book-heroes, or any haut ton coteries, in all the records of the world.—*Democratic Vistas*.

Literature's Service

THE CHIEF TRAIT of any given poet is always the spirit he brings to the observation of Humanity and Nature—the mood out of which he contemplates his subjects. What kind of temper and what amount of faith report these things? Up to how recent a date is the song carried? What the equipment, and special raciness of the singer—what his tinge of coloring? The last value of artistic expressers, past and present—Greek aesthetes, Shakespeare—or in our own day Tennyson, Victor Hugo, Carlyle, Emerson—is certainly involv'd in such questions. I say the profoundest service that poems or any other writings can do for their reader is not merely to satisfy the intellect, or supply something polish'd or interesting, nor even to depict great passions, or persons or events, but to fill him with vigorous and clean manliness, religiousness, and give him *good heart* as a radical possession and habit. The educated world seems to have been growing more and more ennuied for ages, leaving to our time the inheritance of it all. Fortunately there is the original inexhaustible fund of buoyancy, normally resident in the race, forever eligible to be appeal'd to and relied on.—*A Backward Glance.*

Democracy's Need

I SAY THAT DEMOCRACY can never prove itself beyond cavil, until it founds and luxuriantly grows its own forms of art, poems, schools, theology, displacing all that exists, or that has been produced anywhere in the past, under opposite influences. It is curious to me that while so many voices, pens, minds, in the press, lecture rooms, in our Congress, etc., are discussing intellectual topics, pecuniary dangers, legislative problems, the suffrage, tariff and labor questions, and the various business and benevolent needs of America, with propositions, remedies, often worth deep attention, there is one need, a hiatus the profoundest, that no eye seems to perceive, no voice to state. Our fundamental want today in the United States, with closest, amplest reference to present conditions, and to the future, is of a class, and the clear idea of a class, of native authors, literatures, far different, far higher in grade, than any yet known, sacerdotal, modern, fit to cope with our occasions, lands, permeating the whole mass of American mentality, taste, belief, breathing into it a new breath of life, giving it decision, affecting politics far more than the popular superficial suffrage, with results inside and underneath the elections of Presidents or Congresses—radiating, begetting appropriate teachers, schools, manners, and as its grandest result, accomplishing (what neither the schools nor the

churches and their clergy have hitherto accomplished, and without which this nation will no more stand, permanently, soundly, than a house will stand without a substratum), a religious and moral character beneath the political and productive and intellectual bases of the States. For know you not, dear, earnest reader, that the people of our land may all read and write, and may all possess the right to vote—and yet the main things may be entirely lacking?—(and this to suggest them).

Viewed, today, from a point of view sufficiently over-arching, the problem of humanity all over the civilized world is social and religious, and is to be finally met and treated by literature. The priest departs, the divine literatus comes. . . .

Few are aware how the great literature penetrates all, gives hue to all, shapes aggregates and individuals, and, after subtle ways, with irresistible power, constructs, sustains, demolishes at will. Why tower, in reminiscence, above all the nations of the earth, two special lands, petty in themselves, yet inexpressibly gigantic, beautiful, columnar? Immortal Judah lives, and Greece immortal lives, in a couple of poems.—*Democratic Vistas*.

The Qualities of a Tree

I SHOULD NOT TAKE either the biggest or the most picturesque tree to illustrate it. Here is one of my favorites now before me, a fine yellow poplar, quite straight, perhaps 90 feet high, and four thick at the butt. How strong, vital, enduring! how dumbly eloquent! What suggestions of imperturbability and being, as against the human trait of mere seeming. Then the qualities, almost emotional, palpably artistic, heroic, of a tree; so innocent and harmless, yet so savage. It is, yet says nothing. How it rebukes by its tough and equable serenity all weathers, this gusty-temper'd little whiff't, man, that runs indoors at a mite of rain or snow. Science (or rather half-way science) scoffs at reminiscences of dryad and hamadryad, and of trees speaking. But, if they don't, they do as well as most speaking, writing, poetry, sermons—or rather they do a great deal better. I should say indeed that those old dryad reminiscences are quite as true as any, and profounder than most reminiscences we get. ("Cut this out," as the quack medeciners say, and keep by you.) Go and sit in a grove or wood, with one or more of those voiceless companions, and read the foregoing, and think.

One lesson from affiliating a tree—perhaps the greatest moral lesson anyhow from earth, rocks, animals, is that same lesson of inherency, of what is, without the least regard to what the looker-on (the

critic) supposes or says, or, whether he likes or dislikes. What worse—what more general malady pervades each and all of us, our literature, education, attitude toward each other, (even toward ourselves,) than a morbid trouble about seems, (generally temporarily seems too,) and no trouble at all, or hardly any, about the sane, slow-growing, perennial, real parts of character, books, friendship, marriage—humanity's invisible foundations and hold-together?—*Specimen Days*.

The Power of the State

ANYONE WHO STUDIES, in the writings of MM. Taine and de Tocqueville, the state of things which preceded the French Revolution, will see that that tremendous catastrophe came about from so excessive a regulation of men's actions in all their details, and such an enormous drafting away of the products of their actions to maintain the regulating organization, that life was fast becoming impracticable. The empirical utilitarianism of that day, like the empirical utilitarianism of our day, differed from rational utilitarianism in this, that in each successive case it contemplated only the effects of particular interferences on the actions of particular classes of men, and ignored the effects produced by a multiplicity of such interferences on the lives of men at large. And if we ask what then made, and what now makes, this error possible, we find it to be the political superstition that governmental power is subject to no restraints.

When that "divinity" which "doth hedge a king," and which has left a glamour around the body inheriting his power, has quite died away—when it begins to be seen clearly that, in a popularly governed nation, the government is simply a committee of management; it will also be seen that this committee of management has no intrinsic authority. The inevitable conclusion will be that its authority is given by those appointing it; and has just such bounds as

they choose to impose. Along with this will go the further conclusion that the laws it passes are not in themselves sacred; but that whatever sacredness they have, it is entirely due to the ethical sanction—an ethical sanction which, as we find, is derivable from the laws of human life carried on under social conditions. And there will come the corollary that when they have not this ethical sanction they have no sacredness, and may rightly be challenged.

The function of Liberalism in the past was that of putting a limit to the powers of kings. The function of true Liberalism in the future will be that of putting a limit to the powers of Parliaments.—*The Man Versus the State*.

The Social Machine

ALL DESPOTISMS have a shrewd and superior intuition for whatever maintains human independence and dignity, and it is curious to see our radicals laying down the law just like Louis Napoleon, strange to see realistic teaching everywhere serving to smother under a mass of facts the freedom to examine moral questions. Materialism is the auxiliary doctrine of every tyranny, whether of a single man or of the masses. To crush the spiritual, moral, general, human man, if I may say so, by specializing him; to create, not complete human beings but wheels for the great social machine, to give these not conscience but society for a central principle, to enslave the soul to things, to depersonalize man, is the dominant tendency of our epoch. Moral atomism and social unity, the substitution of the laws of dead matter (gravitation, number, mass) for the laws of the moral nature (persuasion, adherence, faith); equality, the principle of mediocrity, becoming dogma; unity through uniformity (the Catholicism of a badly apprehended democracy); number becoming reason; always quantity instead of quality; a negative liberty that has no rule in itself, and is limited only by force, taking the place of positive liberty, which is the possession of an inner rule, a moral authority and check,—this is the dilemma posed by Vinet, socialism and individualism.—I

should rather call it the eternal antagonism between the letter and the spirit, between form and substance, between the outer and the inner, between appearance and reality, which recurs in every conception and every idea. Materialism dulls and petrifies everything, renders everything gross and falsifies every truth. There is a materialism in religion, politics, etc., that spoils everything it touches, liberty, unity, equality, individuality. And so there are two ways of understanding democracy.—*Amiel's Journal*, June 17, 1852. (Translated by Van Wyck Brooks and Charles Van Wyck Brooks.)

The Fear of Truth

MAN DEFENDS HIMSELF as much as he can against truth, as a child does against a medicine, as the man of the Platonic cave does against the light. He does not willingly follow his path, he has to be dragged along backward. The natural liking for the false has several causes: the inheritance of prejudices, which produces an unconscious habit, a slavery; the predominance of the imagination over the reason, which affects the understanding; the predominance of the passions over the conscience, which depraves the heart; the predominance of the will over the intelligence, which vitiates the character. A lively, disinterested, persistent liking for truth is extraordinarily rare. Action and faith enslave thought, both of them in order not to be troubled or inconvenienced by reflection, criticism and doubt.—*Amiel's Journal*, January 22, 1874. (Translated by Van Wyck Brooks and Charles Van Wyck Brooks.)

Oxford

NO, WE ARE ALL SEEKERS STILL! seekers often make mistakes, and I wish mine to redound to my own discredit only, and not to touch Oxford. Beautiful city! so venerable, so lovely, so unravaged by the fierce intellectual life of our century, so serene!

'There are our young barbarians all at play!'
 And yet, steeped in sentiment as she lies, spreading her gardens to the moonlight, and whispering from her towers the last enchantments of the Middle Age, who will deny that Oxford, by her ineffable charm, keeps ever calling us nearer to the true goal of all of us, to the ideal, to perfection,—to beauty, in a word, which is only truth seen from another side?—nearer, perhaps, than all the science of Tübingen. Adorable dreamer, whose heart has been so romantic! who hast given thyself so prodigally, given thyself to sides and to heroes not mine, only never to the Philistines! home of lost causes, and forsaken beliefs, and unpopular names, and impossible loyalties! what example could ever so inspire us to keep down the Philistine in ourselves, what teacher could ever so save us from that bondage to which we are all prone, that bondage which Goethe, in those incomparable lines on the death of Schiller, makes it his friend's highest praise (and nobly did Schiller deserve the praise) to have left miles out of sight behind him;—the bondage of *'was uns alle bändigt, DAS GEMEINE!'* She will

forgive me, even if I have unwittingly drawn upon her a shot or two aimed at her unworthy son; for she is generous, and the cause in which I fight is, after all, hers. Apparitions of a day, what is our puny warfare against the Philistines, compared with the warfare which this queen of romance has been waging against them for centuries, and will wage after we are gone?—*Essays in Criticism.*

The Indian

SOME RACES OF MEN seem molded in wax, soft and melting, at once plastic and feeble. Some races, like some metals, combine the greatest flexibility with the greatest strength. But the Indian is hewn out of a rock. You cannot change the form without destruction of the substance. Such, at least, has too often proved the case. Races of inferior energy have possessed a power of expansion and assimilation to which he is a stranger; and it is this fixed and rigid quality which has proved his ruin. He will not learn the arts of civilization, and he and his forest must perish together. The stern, unchanging features of his mind excite our admiration, from their very immutability; and we look with deep interest on the fate of this irreclaimable son of the wilderness, the child who will not be weaned from the breast of his rugged mother. And our interest increases when we discern in the unhappy wanderer, mingled among his vices, the germs of heroic virtues—a hand bountiful to bestow, as it is rapacious to seize, and, even in extremest famine, imparting its last morsel to a fellow-sufferer; a heart which, strong in friendship as in hate, thinks it not too much to lay down life for its chosen comrade; a soul true to its own idea of honor, and burning with an unquenchable thirst for greatness and renown.—*Iroquois and Algonquin.*

A Game of Chess

SUPPOSE IT WERE PERFECTLY CERTAIN that the life and fortune of every one of us would, one day or other, depend upon his winning or losing a game at chess.

Don't you think that we should all consider it to be a primary duty to learn at least the names and the moves of the pieces; to have a notion of a gambit, and a keen eye for all the means of giving and getting out of check? Do you not think that we should look with a disapprobation amounting to scorn, upon the father who allowed his son, or the state which allowed its members, to grow up without knowing a pawn from a knight?

Yet it is a very plain and elementary truth, that the life, the fortune, and the happiness of every one of us, and, more or less, of those who are connected with us, do depend upon our knowing something of the rules of a game infinitely more difficult and complicated than chess. It is a game which has been played for untold ages, every man and woman of us being one of the two players in a game of his or her own. The chess-board is the world, the pieces are the phenomena of the universe, the rules of the game are what we call the laws of Nature.

The player on the other side is hidden from us. We know that his play is always fair, just, and patient. But also we know, to our cost, that he never

overlooks a mistake, or makes the smallest allowance for ignorance. To the man who plays well, the highest stakes are paid, with that sort of overflowing generosity with which the strong shows delight in strength. And one who plays ill is checkmated—without haste, but without remorse.

My metaphor will remind some of you of the famous picture in which Retzsch has depicted Satan playing at chess with man for his soul. Substitute for the mocking fiend in that picture, a calm, strong angel who is playing for love, as we say, and would rather lose than win—and I should accept it as an image of human life.—*Lay Sermons*.

The Comic Spirit

ONE EXCELLENT TEST of the civilization of a country, as I have said, I take to be the flourishing of the Comic idea and Comedy; and the test of true Comedy is that it shall awaken thoughtful laughter.

If you believe that our civilization is founded in commonsense (and it is the first condition of sanity to believe it), you will, when contemplating men, discern a Spirit overhead; not more heavenly than the light flashed upward from glassy surfaces, but luminous and watchful; never shooting beyond them, nor lagging in the rear; so closely attached to them that it may be taken for a slavish reflex, until its features are studied. It has the sage's brows, and the sunny malice of a faun lurks at the corners of the half-closed lips drawn in an idle wariness of half-tension. That slim feasting smile, shaped like a long-bow, was once a big round satyr's laugh, that flung up the brows like a fortress lifted by gunpowder. The laugh will come again, but it will be of the order of the smile, finely tempered, showing sunlight of the mind, mental richness rather than noisy enormity. Its common aspect is one of unsolicitous observation, as if surveying a full field and having leisure to dart on its chosen morsels, without any fluttering eagerness. Men's fortune upon earth does not attract it; their honesty and shapeliness in the present does; and whenever they wax out of proportion, over-

blown, affected, pretentious, bombastical, hypocritical, pedantic, fantastically delicate; whenever it sees them self-deceived or hoodwinked, given to run riot in idolatries, drifting into vanities, congregating in absurdities, planning short-sightedly, plotting dementedly, whenever they are at variance with their professions, and violate the unwritten but perceptible laws binding them in consideration one to another; whenever they offend sound reason, fair justice, are false in humility or mined with conceit, individually, or in the bulk—the Spirit overhead will look humanely malign and cast an oblique light on them, followed by volleys of silvery laughter. That is the Comic Spirit.—*An Essay on Comedy.*

Laughter

LAUGHTER IS OPEN TO PERVERSION, like other good things; the scornful and the brutal sort are not unknown to us; but the laughter directed by the Comic Spirit is a harmless wine, conducting to sobriety in the degree that it enlivens. It enters you like fresh air into a study; as when one of the sudden contrasts of the comic idea floods the brain like reassuring daylight. You are cognizant of the true kind by feeling that you take it in, savour it, and have what flowers live on, natural air for food. That which you give out—the joyful roar—is not the better part; let that go to good fellowship and the benefit of the lungs. Aristophanes promised his auditors that if they will retain the ideas of the comic poet carefully, as they keep dried fruit in boxes, their garments shall smell odoriferous of wisdom throughout the year. The boast will not be thought an empty one by those who have choice friends that have stocked themselves according to his directions. Such treasuries of sparkling laughter are wells in our desert. Sensitiveness to the comic laugh is a step in civilization. To shrink from being an object of it is a step in cultivation. We know the degree of refinement in men by the matter they will laugh at, and the ring of the laugh; but we know likewise that the larger natures are distinguished by the great breadth of their power of laughter, and no one really loving Moliere is refined

by that love to despise or be dense to Aristophanes, though it may be that the lover of Aristophanes will not have risen to the height of Moliere. Embrace them both, and you have the whole scale of laughter in your breast.—*An Essay on Comedy.*

Democracy's Danger

TO TURN a republican government into a despotism the basest and most brutal, it is not necessary formally to change its constitution or abandon popular elections. It was centuries after Caesar before the absolute master of the Roman world pretended to rule other than by authority of a Senate that trembled before him.

But forms are nothing when substance is gone, and the forms of popular government are those from which the substance of freedom may most easily go. Extremes meet, and a government of universal suffrage and theoretical equality may, under conditions which impel the change, most readily become a despotism. For there despotism advances in the name and with the might of the people. The single source of power once secured, everything is secured. There is no unfranchised class to whom appeal may be made, no privileged orders who in defending their rights may defend those of all. No bulwark remains to stay the flood, no eminence to rise above it. They were belted barons led by a mitred archbishop who curbed the Plantagenet with Magna Charta; it was the middle classes who broke the pride of the Stuarts; but a mere aristocracy of wealth will never struggle while it can hope to bribe a tyrant.

And when the disparity of condition increases, so does universal suffrage make it easy to seize the

source of power. . . . Given a community with republican institutions, in which one class is too rich to be shorn of its luxuries, no matter how public affairs are administered, and another so poor that a few dollars on election day will seem more than any abstract consideration; in which the few roll in wealth and the many seethe with discontent as a condition of things they know not how to remedy, and power must pass into the hands of jobbers who will buy and sell it as the Praetorians sold the Roman purple, or into the hands of demagogues who will seize and wield it for a time, only to be displaced by worse demagogues.—*Progress and Poverty*.

The Poetry of Motion

TO PERSONS STANDING ALONE on a hill during a clear midnight such as this, the roll of the world eastward is almost a palpable movement. The sensation may be caused by the panoramic glide of the stars past earthly objects, which is perceptible in a few minutes of stillness, or by the better outlook upon space that a hill affords, or by the wind, or by the solitude; but whatever be its origin, the impression of riding along is vivid and abiding. The poetry of motion is a phrase much in use, and to enjoy the epic form of that gratification it is necessary to stand on a hill at a small hour of the night, and having first expanded with a sense of difference from the mass of civilized mankind, who are dream-wrapt and disregardful of all such proceedings at this time, long and quietly watch your stately progress through the stars. After such a nocturnal reconnoiter it is hard to get back to earth, and to believe that the consciousness of such majestic speeding is derived from a tiny human frame.—*Far From the Madding Crowd.*

Birds and Death

THE BIRD, however hard the frost may be, flies briskly to his customary roosting place, and, with beak tucked into his wing, falls asleep. He has no apprehensions; only the blood grows colder and colder, the pulse feebler as he sleeps, and at midnight, or in the early morning, he drops from his perch—dead.

Yesterday he lived and moved, responsive to a thousand external influences, reflecting earth and sky in his small, brilliant brain as in a looking glass; also he had a various language, the inherited knowledge of his race, and the faculty of flight, by means of which he could shoot, meteor-like, across the sky, and pass swiftly from place to place; and with it such perfect control over all his organs, such marvelous certitude in all his motions, as to be able to drop himself down from the tallest tree-top, or out of the void air, on to a slender spray, and scarcely cause its leaves to tremble. Now, on this morning, he lies stiff and motionless; if you were to take him up and drop him from your hand, he would fall to the ground like a stone or a lump of clay—so easy and swift is the passage from life to death in wild nature! But he was never miserable.—*Birds in Town and Village.*

The Love of Nature

WHEN I HEAR PEOPLE say they have not found the world and life so agreeable or interesting as to be in love with it, or that they look with equanimity to its end, I am apt to think they have never been properly alive nor seen with clear vision the world they think so meanly of, or anything in it—not a blade of grass. Only I know that mine is an exceptional case, that the visible world is to me more beautiful and interesting than to most persons, that the delight I experienced in my communings with Nature did not pass away, leaving nothing but a recollection of vanished happiness to intensify a present pain. The happiness was never lost, but owing to that faculty I have spoken of, had cumulative effect on the mind and was mine again, so that in my worst times, when I was compelled to exist shut out from Nature in London for long periods, sick and poor and friendless, I could yet always feel that it was infinitely better to be than not to be,—*Far Away and Long Ago*.

The Wealth of a Nation

THE WORLD . . . is only beginning to see that the wealth of a nation consists more than in anything else in the number of superior men that it harbors. In the practical realm it has always recognized this, and known that no price is too high to pay for a great statesman or great captain of industry. But it is equally so in the religious and moral sphere, in the poetic and artistic sphere and in the philosophic and scientific sphere. Geniuses are ferments; and when they come together as they have done in certain lands at certain times, the whole population seems to share in the higher energy which they awaken. The effects are incalculable and often not easy to trace in detail, but they are pervasive and momentous. . . .

From the bare economic point of view the importance of geniuses is only beginning to be appreciated. How can we measure the cash-value to France of a Pasteur, to England of a Kelvin, to Germany of an Ostwald, to us here of a Burbank? One main care of every country in the future ought to be to find out who its first-rate thinkers are and to help them. Cost here becomes something entirely irrelevant, the returns are sure to be so incommensurable.

. . . Geniuses are sensitive plants, in some respects like prima donnas. They have to be treated tenderly. They don't need to live in superfluity; but they need

freedom from harassing care; they need books and instruments; they are always overworking, so they need generous vacations; and above all things they need occasionally to travel far and wide in the interests of their souls' development. Where quality is the thing sought after, the thing of supreme quality is cheap, whatever be the price one has to pay for it.
—*Memories and Studies.*

The Importance of the Individual

AN UNLEARNED CARPENTER of my acquaintance once said in my hearing: "There is very little difference between one man and another; but what little there is, *is very important.*" This distinction seems to me to go to the root of the matter. It is not only the size of the difference which concerns the philosopher, but also its place and its kind. An inch is a small thing, but we know the proverb about an inch on a man's nose. . . .

Now, there is a striking law over which few people seem to have pondered. It is this: That among all the differences which exist, the only ones that interest us strongly are those we do not take for granted. We are not a bit elated that our friend should have two hands and the power of speech, and should practice the matter-of-course human virtues; and quite as little are we vexed that our dog goes on all fours and fails to understand our conversation. Expecting no more from the latter companion, and no less from the former, we get what we expect and are satisfied. We never think of communing with the dog by discourse of philosophy, or with the friend by head-scratching or the throwing of crusts to be snapped at. But if either dog or friend fall above or below the expected standard, they arouse the most lively emotion. On our brother's vices or genius we never weary of descanting; to his bipedism or his hairless skin we do

not consecrate a thought. What he says may transport us; that he is able to speak at all leaves us stone cold. The reason of all this is that his virtues and vices and utterances might, compatibly with the current range of variation in our tribe, be just the opposites of what they are, while his zoologically human attributes cannot possibly go astray. There is thus a zone of insecurity in human affairs in which all the dramatic interest lies; the rest belongs to the dead machinery of the stage. This is the formative zone, the part not yet ingrained into the race's average, not yet a typical, hereditary, and constant factor of the social community in which it occurs. It is like the soft layer beneath the bark of the tree in which all the year's growth is going on. Life has abandoned the mighty trunk inside, which stands inert and belongs almost to the inorganic world. . . .

The zone of the individual differences, and of the social "twists" which by common confession they initiate, is the zone of formative processes, the dynamic belt of quivering uncertainty, the line where past and future meet. It is the theater of all we do not take for granted, the stage of the living drama of life; and however narrow its scope, it is roomy enough to lodge the whole range of human passions. The sphere of the race's average, on the contrary, no matter how large it may be, is a dead and stagnant thing, an achieved possession, from which all insecurity has vanished. Like the trunk of a tree, it has been built up by successive concretions of successive active zones. The moving present in which we live with its problems and passions, its individual rival-

ries, victories and defeats, will soon pass over to the majority and leave its small deposit on this static mass, to make room for fresh actors and a newer play.—*The Will to Believe.*

WILLIAM JAMES

The World's Leadership

THE NOTION that a people can run itself and its affairs anonymously is now well-known to be the silliest of absurdities. Mankind does nothing save through initiatives on the part of inventors, great or small, and imitation by the rest of us—these are the sole factors active in human progress. Individuals of genius show the way, and set the patterns, which common people then adopt and follow. The rivalry of the patterns is the history of the world. Our democratic problem thus is stated in ultra-simple terms: Who are the kind of men from whom our majorities shall take their cue? Whom shall they treat as rightful leaders? We and our leaders are the X and Y of the equation here; all other historic circumstances, be they economical, political, or intellectual, are only the background of occasion on which the living drama works itself out between us.—*Memories and Studies.*

The True Education

WHAT THE COLLEGES—teaching humanities by examples which may be special, but which must be typical and pregnant—should at least try to give us is a general sense of what, under various disguises, *superiority* has always signified and may still signify. The feeling for a good human job anywhere, the admiration of the really admirable, the disesteem of what is cheap and trashy and impermanent—this is what we call the critical sense, the sense for ideal values. It is the better part of what men know as wisdom.—*Memories and Studies.*

Human Nature and War

MAN, BIOLOGICALLY CONSIDERED, and whatever else he may be into the bargain, is the most formidable of all beasts of prey, and, indeed, the only one that preys systematically on his own species. We are once for all adapted to the military status. A millennium of peace would not breed the fighting disposition out of our bone and marrow, and a function so ingrained and vital will never consent to die without resistance and will always find impassioned apologists and idealizers. . . .

But apart from theoretic defenders, and apart from every soldierly individual straining at the leash and clamoring for opportunity, war has an omnipotent support in the form of our imagination. Man lives by habits indeed, but what he lives for is thrills and excitements. The only relief from habit's tediousness is periodical excitement. From time immemorial wars have been, especially for non-combatants, the supremely thrilling excitement. Heavy and dragging at its end, at its outset every war means an explosion of imaginative energy. The dams of routine burst, and boundless prospects open. . . .

This is the constitution of human nature which we have to work against. The plain truth is that people want war. . . . War is human nature at its uttermost. We are here to do our uttermost. It is a sacrament. Society would rot without the mystical blood-payment.

We do ill, I think, therefore, to talk much of universal peace or of a general disarmament. We must go in for preventive medicine, not for radical cure. We must cheat our foe, circumvent him in detail, not try to change his nature. In one respect war is like love, though in no other. Both leave us intervals of rest; and in the intervals life goes on perfectly well without them, though the imagination still dallies with their possibility. Equally insane when once aroused and under headway, whether they shall be aroused or not depends on accidental circumstances. How are old maids and old bachelors made? Not by deliberate vows of celibacy, but by sliding on from year to year with no sufficient matrimonial provocation. So of the nations with their wars. Let the general possibility of war be left open, in Heaven's name, for the imagination to dally with. Let the soldiers dream of killing, as the old maids dream of marrying.

But organize in every conceivable way the practical machinery for making each successive chance of war abortive. Put peace men in power; educate the editors and statesmen to responsibility. . . . Seize every pretext, however small, for arbitration methods, and multiply the precedents; foster rival excitements, and invent new outlets for heroic energy; and from one generation to another the chances are that irritation will grow less acute and states of strain less dangerous among the nations.—*Memories and Studies*.

The Moral Equivalent for War

THERE IS NOTHING to make one indignant in the mere fact that life is hard, that men should toil and suffer pain. The planetary conditions once for all are such, and we can stand it. But that so many men, by mere accidents of birth and opportunity, should have a life of *nothing else* but toil and pain and hardness and inferiority imposed upon them, should have *no* vacation, while others natively no more deserving never get any taste of this campaigning life at all,—*this* is capable of arousing indignation in reflective minds. It may end by seeming shameful to all of us that some of us have nothing but campaigning, and others nothing but unmanly ease. If now—and this is my idea—there were, instead of military conscription a conscription of the whole youthful population to form for a certain number of years a part of the army enlisted against *Nature*, the injustice would tend to be evened out, and numerous other goods to the commonwealth would follow. The military ideals of hardihood and discipline would be wrought into the growing fiber of the people; no one would remain blind as the luxurious classes now are blind, to man's relations to the globe he lives on, and to the permanently sour and hard foundations of his higher life. To coal and iron mines, to freight trains, to fishing fleets in December, dish-washing, clothes-washing, and window-washing, to road-building and tunnel-

making, to foundries and stoke-holes, and to the frames of skyscrapers, would our gilded youths be drafted off, according to their choice, to get the childishness knocked out of them, and to come back into society with healthier sympathies and soberer ideas. They would have paid their blood-tax, done their own part in the immemorial human warfare against nature; they would tread the earth more proudly, the women would value them more highly, they would be better fathers and teachers of the following generation. . . . We should get toughness without callousness, authority with as little criminal cruelty as possible, and painful work done cheerily because the duty is temporary, and threatens not, as now, to degrade the whole remainder of one's life. I spoke of the "moral equivalent" of war. So far, war has been the only force that can discipline a whole community, and until an equivalent discipline is organized, I believe that war must have its way.—*Memories and Studies.*

On Tolerance

IN MY PREVIOUS TALK, "On a Certain Blindness," I tried to make you feel how soaked and shot-through life is with values and meanings which we fail to realize because of our external and insensible point of view. The meanings are there for the others, but they are not there for us. There lies more than a mere interest of curious speculation in understanding this. It has the most tremendous practical importance. I wish that I could convince you of it as I feel it myself. It is the basis of all our tolerance, social, religious, and political. The forgetting of it lies at the root of every stupid and sanguinary mistake that rulers over subject-peoples make. The first thing to learn in intercourse with others is non-interference with their own peculiar ways of being happy, provided those ways do not assume to interfere by violence with ours. No one has insight into all the ideals. No one should presume to judge them off-hand. The pretension to dogmatize about them in each other is the root of most human injustices and cruelties, and the trait in human character most likely to make the angels weep.—*Talks To Teachers on Psychology.*

The Deaf and Dumb

AS WE SAT, one came in who but then returned from an absence; as the custom is he would first declare his tidings in the mejlis, and afterward go home to his own household. He sat down on his knee, but was so poor a man, there was none in the sheykhly company that rose to kiss him: with a solemn look he stayed him a moment on his camel-stick, and then pointing gravely with it to every man, one after other, he saluted him with an hollow voice, by his name, saying, 'The Lord strengthen thee!' A poor old Beduin wife, when she heard that her son was come again, had followed him over the hot sand hither; now she stood to await him, faintly leaning upon a stake of the beyt a little without, since it is not for any woman to enter where the men's mejlis is setting. His tidings told, he stepped abroad to greet his mother, who ran and cast her weak arms about his manly neck, trembling for age and tenderness, to see him alive again and sound; and kissing him she could not speak, but uttered little cries. Some of the coffee-drinkers laughed roughly, and mocked her drivelling, but Motlog said, 'Wherefore laugh? is not this the love of a mother?'—*Travels in Arabia Deserta.*

Speculative Habits

NOTHING SO MUCH tends to blur moral distinctions, and to obliterate plain duties, as the free indulgence of speculative habits. We must all know many a sorry scrub who has fairly talked himself into the belief that nothing but his intellectual difficulties prevents him from being another St. Francis. We think we could suggest a few score of other obstacles.

Would it not be better for most people, if instead of stuffing their heads with controversy, they were to devote their scanty leisure to reading books, such as, to name one only, Kaye's "History of the Sepoy War," which are crammed full of activities and heroisms, and which force upon the reader's mind the healthy conviction that, after all, whatever mysteries may appertain to mind and matter, and notwithstanding grave doubts as to the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel, it is bravery, truth, and honour, loyalty and hard work, each man at his post, which make this planet inhabitable?

In these days of champagne and shoddy, of display of teacups and rotten foundations—especially, too, now that the "nexus" of "cash payment," which was to bind man to man in the bonds of a common pecuniary interest, is hopelessly broken—it becomes plain that the real wants of the age are not analyses of religious belief, nor discussions as to whether "Person" or "Stream of Tendency" are the apter words to

describe God by; but a steady supply of honest, plain-sailing men who can be safely trusted with small sums, and to do what in them lies to maintain the honour of the various professions, and to restore the credit of English workmanship. We want Lambs, not Coleridges. The verdict to be strived for is not "Well guessed," but "Well done."

All our remarks are confined to the realm of opinion. Faith may be well left alone, for she is, to give her her due, our largest manufacturer of good works, and whenever her furnaces are blown out, morality suffers.—*Obiter Dicta.*

Falstaff

THERE ARE, WE FEAR, a number of people who regard Falstaff as a worthless fellow, and who would refrain (if they could) from laughing at his jests. These people do not understand his claim to grateful and affectionate regard. He did more to produce that mental condition of which laughter is the expression than any man who ever lived. But for the cheering presence of him and men like him, this vale of tears would be a more terrible dwelling-place than it is. In short, Falstaff has done an immense deal to alleviate misery and promote positive happiness. What more can be said of your heroes and philanthropists?

It is, perhaps, characteristic of this commercial age that benevolence should be always associated, if not considered synonymous, with the giving of money. But this is clearly mistaken, for we have to consider what effect the money given produces on the minds and bodies of human beings. Sir Richard Whittington was an eminently benevolent man, and spent his money freely for the good of his fellow-citizens. . . . This is well. Let the sick and the poor, who enjoy his hospitality and receive his doles, bless his memory. But how much wider and further-reaching is the influence of Falstaff! Those who enjoy his good things are not only the poor and the sick, but all who speak the English language. Nay, more; translation has made him the inheritance of the

world, and the benefactor of the entire human race.

It may be, however, that some other nations fail fully to understand and appreciate the mirth and the character of the man. A Dr. G. G. Gervinus, of Heidelberg, has written, in the German language, a heavy work on Shakespeare, in which he attacks Falstaff in a very solemn and determined manner, and particularly charges him with selfishness and want of conscience. We are inclined to set down this malignant attack to envy. Falstaff is the author and cause of universal laughter. Dr. Gervinus will never be the cause of anything universal; but, so far as his influence extends, he produces headaches. It is probably a painful sense of this contrast that goads on the author of headaches to attack the author of laughter.—*Obiter Dicta*.

Memoir Writers

HOW THEN DOES A MAN—be he good or bad—big or little—a philosopher or a fribble—St. Paul or Horace Walpole—make his memoirs interesting?

To say that the one thing needful is individuality, is not quite enough. To be an individual is the inevitable, and in most cases the unenviable lot of every child of Adam. Each one of us has, like a tin soldier, a stand of his own. To have an individuality is no sort of distinction, but to be able to make it felt in writing is not only distinction but under favouring circumstances immortality.

Have we not all some correspondents, though probably but a few, from whom we never receive a letter without feeling sure that we shall find inside the envelope something written that will make us either glow with the warmth or shiver with the cold of our correspondent's life? But how many other people are to be found, good, honest people, too, who no sooner take pen in hand than they stamp unreality on every word they write. It is a hard fate, but they cannot escape it. They may be as liberal as the late Earl Stanhope, as painstaking as Bishop Stubbs, as much in earnest as the Prime Minister [Gladstone]—their lives may be noble, their aims high, but no sooner do they seek to narrate to us their story than we find it is not to be. To harken to them is past praying for. We turn from them as from a guest who

has outstayed his welcome. Their writing wearies, irritates, disgusts.

Here, then, at last, we have the two classes of memoir writers—those who manage to make themselves felt, and those who do not. Of the latter a very little is a great deal too much—of the former we can never have enough.—*Obiter Dicta*.

The Fear of Pan

EARTH WAGES OPEN WAR against her children, and under her softest touch hides treacherous claws. The cool waters invite us in to drown; the domestic hearth burns up in the hour of sleep, and makes an end of all. Everything is good or bad, helpful or deadly; not in itself, but by its circumstances. For a few bright days in England the hurricane must break forth and the North Sea pay a toll of populous ships. And when the universal music has led lovers into the paths of dalliance, confident of Nature's sympathy, suddenly the air shifts into a minor, and death makes a clutch from his ambushade below the bed of marriage. For death is given in a kiss; the dearest kindnesses are fatal; and into this life, where one thing preys upon another, the child too often makes its entrance from the mother's corpse. It is no wonder, with so traitorous a scheme of things, if the wise people who created for us the idea of Pan thought that of all fears the fear of him was the most terrible, since it embraces all. And still we preserve the phrase: a panic terror. To reckon dangers too curiously, to hearken too intently for the threat that runs through all the winning music of the world, to hold back the hand from the rose because of the thorn, and from life because of death: this is to be afraid of Pan. Highly respectable citizens who flee life's pleasures and responsibilities and keep, with upright hat, upon the

midway of custom, avoiding the right hand and the left, the ecstasies and the agonies, how surprised they would be if they could hear their attitude mythologically expressed, and knew themselves as tooth-chattering ones, who flee from Nature because they fear the hand of Nature's God!—*Virginibus Puerisque*.

Children

THEY ARE WHEELED in perambulators or dragged about by nurses in a pleasing stupor. A vague, faint, abiding wonderment possesses them. Here and there some specially remarkable circumstance, such as a water-cart or a guardsman, fairly penetrates into the seat of thought, and calls them, for half a moment, out of themselves; and you may see them, still towed sideways by the inexorable nurse as by a sort of destiny, but still staring at the bright object in their wake. It may be some minutes before another such moving spectacle reawakens them to the world in which they dwell. For other children, they almost invariably show some intelligent sympathy. "There is a fine fellow making mud pies," they seem to say; "that I can understand, there is some sense in mud pies." But the doings of their elders, unless where they are speakingly picturesque or recommend themselves by the quality of being easily imitable, they let go over their heads (as we say) without the least regard. If it were not for this perpetual imitation we should be tempted to fancy they despised us outright, or only considered us in the light of creatures brutally strong and brutally silly; among whom they condescended to dwell in obedience like a philosopher at a barbarous court.—*Virginibus Puerisque.*

Concerning Writers

NO MAN MAY WRITE interestingly and keep within the bounds of your beliefs. He must occasionally go so far as to pleasantly shock you, and cause the uncomfortable feeling that a good man cannot follow him all the way. The author who aims to write nothing offensive to anyone presently writes only hymns and leaflets explaining the Sunday school lesson; and then only children read him; and they read him because they fear they will be scolded if they do not. Only interesting writers are actually read. But an interesting writer with wrong opinions is not necessarily mischievous. If I come across a book really worth while, it does not change my beliefs; if the author attacks an opinion I hold, he confirms it, and I have the added pleasure of thinking: 'Here is a smart man, and a good writer; but how blind he is in the presence of Truth!' A mere book or newspaper article does not change your opinions. The blood you inherited has much to do with them; your experiences in life gradually form them, and you cannot change in an hour or a moment to oblige a good writer or talker. So I beg that you do not neglect good writers because you have heard they have false notions.—*Aphorisms.*

Prospero is Dead

EDISON THE LIGHT-BEARER has gone into darkness. The master of the waves of sound is silent. Round him had gathered an atmosphere of respect, admiration and affection such as surrounded no other American of our time. His victories over iron fortune, his long years of almost superhuman labor, the splendor and scope of his inventions, took strong hold of the popular imagination; the national pride, too. Ours was this wonder-smith of the world. He might have wrought all these marvels and remained apart, solitary in his laboratory. His companionable and social nature, its fine simplicities and boyishness, endeared the man, set up his essential human image in millions of minds. He was not only honored, but loved.

It seems at first as though some mighty and creative force had ended. It is not ended. It is continued and transmitted immortally. As he profited by his predecessors, so will his successors profit by him. If nothing can take the place of or soften the regret for a warm, human presence, let us think what an earthly immortality is his. Every incandescent light is his remembrancer. Every power house is his monument. Wherever there is a phonograph or radio, wherever there is a moving picture, mute or speaking, Edison lives. Of him and no man else may it be truly said that "his fame folds in this orb o' the earth."

The Eskimo on Bering Strait, the Kirghiz of the

steppes, East Indians in remote villages, Moors of the town and Bedouins of the desert, east, west, north, south, all the tribes of men, owe a harmless pleasure, a quickening of the imaginative pulse, to the incomparable magician. He is the god of safety to seamen and riders of the air. He is the universal lamplighter. Multitudinous homes and buildings and streets shine every night in his praise. He has illuminated and broadened the use and wont of life. How many men and women he has set to work in the industries sprung from his brain is beyond estimation. Between the time of our grandfathers and our own he had transformed the world. He has added immeasurably to the comfort, enjoyment and productivity of mankind.

The farewell of regret to the eager, friendly, so profoundly living and seeking man will change insensibly into a hymn of triumph, undying hope and everlastingness. If in the body Edison is to vanish from us, he survives in the subtle and mysterious powers he made his servants. He is ever living in electricity, sound, light. Prospero is not dead because the wand has dropped from his hand. He reigns still in his viewless empery.—*The New York Times*.

Eternal Moments

THOSE WHOM the poet makes live have their myriad emotions of joy and terror, of courage and despair, of pleasure and of suffering. The seasons come and go in glad or saddening pageant, and with winged or leaden feet the years pass by before them. They have their youth and their manhood, they are children, and they grow old. It is always dawn for St. Helena, as Veronese saw her at the window. Through the still morning air the angels bring her the symbol of God's pain. The cool breezes of the morning lift the guilt threads from her brow. On that little hill by the city of Florence, where the lovers of Giorgione are lying, it is always the solstice of noon, of noon made so languorous by summer suns that hardly can the slim naked girl dip into the marble tank the round bubble of clear glass, and the long fingers of the lute-player rest idly upon the chords. It is twilight always for the dancing nymphs whom Corot set free among the silver poplars of France. In eternal twilight they move, those frail diaphanous figures, whose tremulous white feet seem not to touch the dew-drenched grass they tread on. But those who walk in epos, drama, or romance, see through the labouring months the young moons wax and wane, and watch the night from evening unto morning star, and from sunrise unto sunsetting, can note the shifting day with all its gold and shadow. For them, as for us, the flowers

bloom and wither, and the Earth, that Green-tressed Goddess as Coleridge calls her, alters her raiment for their pleasure. . . .—*Intentions*.

OSCAR WILDE

Literature and Life

THE STATUE is concentrated to one moment of perfection. The image stained upon the canvas possesses no spiritual element of growth or change. If they know nothing of death it is because they know little of life, for the secrets of life and death belong to those and those only whom the sequence of time affects and who possess not merely the present but the future and can rise or fall from a past of glory or of shame. Movement, that problem of the visible arts, can be truly realized by Literature alone. It is Literature that shows us the body in its swiftness and the soul in its unrest,—*Intentions*.

The Sea and Man

FOR ALL that has been said of the love that certain natures (on shore) have professed to feel for it, for all the celebrations it has been the object of in prose and song, the sea has never been friendly to man. At most it has been the accomplice of human restlessness, and playing the part of dangerous abettor of world-wide ambitions. Faithful to no race after the manner of the kindly earth, receiving no impress from valour and toil and self-sacrifice, recognizing no finality of dominion, the sea has never adopted the cause of its masters like those lands where the victorious nations of mankind have taken root, rocking their cradles and setting up their gravestones. He—man or people—who, putting his trust in the friendship of the sea, neglects the strength and cunning of his right hand, is a fool! As if it were too great, too mighty for common virtues, the ocean has no compassion, no faith, no law, no memory. Its fickleness is to be held true to men's purposes only by an undaunted resolution, and by a sleepless, armed, jealous vigilance, in which, perhaps, there has always been more hate than love. *Odi et amo* may well be the confession of those who consciously or blindly have surrendered their existence to the fascination of the sea. All the tempestuous passions of mankind's young days, the love of lott and the love of glory, the love of adventure and the love of danger,

with the great love of the unknown and vast dreams of dominion and power, have passed like images reflected from a mirror, leaving no record upon the mysterious face of the sea. Impenetrable and heartless, the sea has given nothing of itself to the suitors for its precarious favours. Unlike the earth, it cannot be subjugated at any cost of patience and toil. For all is fascination that has lured so many to a violent death, its immensity has never been loved as the mountains, the plains, the desert itself, have been loved. Indeed, I suspect that, leaving aside the protestations and tributes of writers who, one is safe in saying, care for little else in the world than the rhythm of their lines and the cadence of their phrase, the love of the sea, to which some men and nations confess so readily, is a complex sentiment wherein pride enters for much, necessity for not a little, and the love of ships—the untiring servants of our hopes and our self-esteem—for the best and most genuine part.—*The Mirror of the Sea.*

Days of Youth

THE SEA WAS WHITE like a sheet of foam, like a caldron of boiling milk; there was not a break in the clouds, no—not the size of a man's hand—no, not for so much as ten seconds. There was for us no sky, there were for us no stars, no sun, no universe—nothing but angry clouds and an infuriated sea. We pumped watch and watch, for dear life; and it seemed to last for months, for years, for all eternity, as though we had been dead and gone to a hell for sailors. We forgot the day of the week, the name of the month, what year it was, and whether we had ever been ashore. The sails blew away, she lay broadside on under a weather-cloth, the ocean poured over her, and we did not care. We turned those handles, and had the eyes of idiots. . . .

And there was somewhere in me the thought: By Jove! this is the deuce of an adventure—something you read about; and it is my first voyage as second mate—and I am only twenty—and here I am lasting it out as well as any of these men, and keeping my chaps up to the mark. I was pleased. I would not have given up the experience for worlds. I had moments of exultation. Whenever the old dismantled craft pitched heavily with her counter high in the air, she seemed to me to throw up, like an appeal, like a defiance, like a cry to the clouds without mercy, the words written on her stern: '*Judea, London. Do or Die.*'

O youth! The strength of it, the faith of it, the imagination of it! To me she was not an old rattle-trap carting about the world a lot of coal for a freight—to me she was the endeavour, the test, the trial of life. I think of her with pleasure, with affection, with regret—as you would think of some one dead you have loved. I shall never forget her. . . . Pass the bottle.—*Youth.*

JOSEPH CONRAD

Extremities of Emotion

AFTER THE MIDDLE TURN of life's way we consider dangers and joys with a tranquil mind. So I proceed in peace to declare that I have always suspected in the effort to bring into play the extremities of emotions the debasing touch of insincerity. In order to move others deeply we must deliberately allow ourselves to be carried away beyond the bounds of our normal sensibility—innocently enough, perhaps, and of necessity, like an actor who raises his voice on the stage above the pitch of natural conversation—but still we have to do that. And surely this is no great sin. But the danger lies in the writer becoming the victim of his own exaggeration, losing the exact notion of sincerity, and in the end coming to despise truth itself as something too cold, too blunt for his purpose—as, in fact, not good enough for his insistent emotion. From laughter and tears the descent is easy to snivelling and giggles.—*A Personal Record.*

The East

AND THEN I SAW the men of the East—they were looking at me. The whole length of the jetty was full of people. I saw brown, bronze, yellow faces, the black eyes, the glitter, the colour of an Eastern crowd. And all these beings stared without a murmur, without a sigh, without a movement. They stared down at the boats, at the sleeping men who at night had come to them from the sea. Nothing moved. The fronds of palms stood still against the sky. Not a branch stirred along the shore, and the brown roofs of hidden houses peeped through the green foliage, through the big leaves that hung shining and still like leaves forged of heavy metal. This was the East of the ancient navigators, so old, so mysterious, resplendent and sombre, living and unchanged, full of danger and promise. And these were the men . . . I see it now—the wide sweep of the bay, the glittering sands, the wealth of green infinite and varied, the sea blue like the sea of a dream, the crowd of attentive faces, the blaze of vivid colour—the water reflecting it all, the curve of the shore, the jetty, the high-sterned outlandish craft floating still, and the three boats with the tired men from the West sleeping, unconscious of the land and the people and of the violence of sunshine. They slept thrown across the thwarts, curled on bottom-boards, in the careless attitudes of death. The head of the old skip-

per, leaning back in the stern of the long-boat, had fallen on his breast, and he looked as though he would never wake. Farther out old Mahon's face was upturned to the sky, with the long white beard spread out on his breast, as though he had been shot where he sat at the tiller; and a man, all in a heap in the bows of the boat, slept with both arms embracing the stem-head and with his cheek laid on the gunwale. The East looked at them without a sound.

I have known its fascination since; I have seen the mysterious shores, the still water, the lands of brown nations, where a stealthy Nemesis lies in wait, pursues, overtakes so many of the conquering race, who are proud of their wisdom, of their knowledge, of their strength. But for me all the East is contained in that vision of my youth. . . .

He drank.

Ah! The good old time—the good old time. Youth and the sea. Glamour and the sea! The good, strong sea, the salt, bitter sea, that could whisper to you and roar at you and knock your breath out of you.

He drank again.

By all that's wonderful it is the sea, I believe, the sea itself—or is it youth alone? Who can tell? But you here—you all had something out of life: money, love—whatever one gets on shore—and, tell me, wasn't that the best time, that time when we were young at sea; young and had nothing, on the sea that gives nothing, except hard knocks—and sometimes a chance to feel your strength—that only—what you all regret?—*Youth*.

The Heat of Life

I NEED NOT TELL YOU what it is to be knocking about in an open boat. I remember nights and days of calm when we pulled, we pulled, and the boat seemed to stand still, as if bewitched within the circle of the sea horizon. I remember the heat, the deluge of rain-squalls that kept us baling for dear life (but filled our water-cask), and I remember sixteen hours on end with a mouth dry as a cinder and a steering-oar over the stern to keep my first command head on to a breaking sea. I did not know how good a man I was till then. I remember the drawn faces, the dejected figures of my two men, and I remember my youth and the feeling that will never come back any more—the feeling that I could last for ever, outlast the sea, the earth, and all men; the deceitful feeling that lures us on to joys, to perils, to love, to vain effort—to death; the triumphant conviction of strength, the heat of life in the handful of dust, the glow in the heart that with every year grows dim, grows cold, grows small, and expires—and expires, too soon—before life itself.—*Youth.*

Men's Ambitions

I THINK THAT ALL AMBITIONS are lawful except those which climb upward on the miseries or credulities of mankind. All intellectual or artistic-ambitions are permissible, up to and even beyond the limit of prudent sanity. They can hurt no one. If they are mad, then so much the worse for the artist. Indeed, as virtue is said to be, such ambitions are their own reward. Is it such a very mad presumption to believe in the sovereign power of one's art, to try for other means, for other ways of affirming this belief in the deeper appeal of one's work? To try to go deeper is not to be insensible. An historian of hearts is not an historian of emotions, yet he penetrates further, restrained as he may be, since his aim is to reach the very fount of laughter and tears. The sight of human affairs deserves admiration and pity. They are worthy of respect, too. And he is not insensible who pays them the undemonstrative tribute of a sigh which is not a sob, and of a smile which is not a grin. Resignation, not mystic, not detached, but resignation open-eyed, conscious, and informed by love, is the only one of our feelings for which it is impossible to become a sham.—*A Personal Record.*

Poetry and Prose

WHEN I EXAMINE MY MIND and try to discern clearly in the matter, I cannot satisfy myself that there are any such things as poetical ideas. No truth, it seems to me, is too precious, no observation too profound, and no sentiment too exalted to be expressed in prose. The utmost that I could admit is that some ideas do, while others do not, lend themselves kindly to poetical expression; and that these receive from poetry an enhancement which glorifies and almost transfigures them, and which is not perceived to be a separate thing except by analysis.

“Whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life shall find it.” That is the most important truth which has ever been uttered, and the greatest discovery ever made in the moral world; but I do not find in it anything which I should call poetical. On the other hand, when Wisdom says in the Proverbs “He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul; all they that hate me, love death,” that is to me poetry, because of the words in which the idea is clothed; and as for the seventh verse of the forty-ninth Psalm in the Book of Common Prayer, “But no man may deliver his brother, nor make agreement unto God for him,” that is to me poetry so moving that I can hardly keep my voice steady in reading it. And that this is the effect of language I can ascertain by experiment: the same

thought in the Bible version, "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him," I can read without emotion.

Poetry is not the thing said but a way of saying it.
—*The Name and Nature of Poetry.*

On Poetry

POETRY INDEED seems to me more physical than intellectual. A year or two ago, in common with others, I received from America a request that I would define poetry. I replied that I could no more define poetry than a terrier can define a rat, but that I thought we both recognized the object by the symptoms which it evokes in us. One of these symptoms was described by Eliphaz the Temanite: "A spirit passed before my face: the hair of my flesh stood up." Experience has taught me, when I am shaving of a morning, to keep watch over my thoughts, because, if a line of poetry strays into my memory, my skin bristles so that the razor ceases to act. This particular symptom is accompanied by a shiver down the spine; there is another which consists in a constriction of the throat and a precipitation of water to the eyes; and there is a third which I can only describe by borrowing a phrase from one of Keats' last letters where he says, speaking of Fanny Brawne, "everything that reminds me of her goes through me like a spear." The seat of this sensation is the pit of the stomach.—*The Name and Nature of Poetry.*

East and West

IN CHINA letters are respected not merely to a degree but in a sense which must seem, I think, to you unintelligible and overstrained. But there is a reason for it. Our poets and literary men have taught their successors, for long generations, to look for good not in wealth, not in power, not in miscellaneous activity, but in a trained, a choice, an exquisite appreciation of the most simple and universal relations of life. To feel, and in order to feel to express, or at least to understand the expression of all that is lovely in Nature, all that is poignant and sensitive in man, is to us in itself a sufficient end. A rose in a moonlit garden, the shadow of trees on the turf, almond bloom, scent of pine, the wine-cup and the guitar; these and the pathos of life and death, the long embrace, the hand stretched out in vain, the moment that glides for ever away, with its freight of music and light, into the shadow and hush of the haunted past, all that we have, all that eludes us, a bird on the wing, a perfume escaped on the gale—to all these things we are trained to respond, and the response is what we call literature.—*Letters from a Chinese Official.*

The Unknowable

I HAVE SOMETIMES WONDERED at the value ladies set upon jewels: as centres of light, jewels seem rather trivial and monotonous. And yet there is an unmistakable spell about these pebbles; they can be taken up and turned over; they can be kept; they are faithful possessions; the sparkle of them, shifting from moment to moment, is constant from age to age. They are substances. The same aspects of light and colour, if they were homeless in space, or could be spied only once and irrecoverably, like fireworks, would have a less comfortable charm. In jewels there is the security, the mystery, the inexhaustible fixity proper to substance. After all, perhaps I can understand the fascination they exercise over the ladies, is the same that the eternal feminine exercises over us. Our contact with them is unmistakable, our contemplation of them gladly renewed, and pleasantly prolonged; yet in one sense they are unknowable; we cannot fathom the secret of their constancy, of their hardness, of that perpetual but uncertain brilliancy by which they dazzle us and hide themselves. These qualities of the jewel and of the eternal feminine are also the qualities of substance and of the world. The existence of this world—unless we lapse for a moment into an untenable scepticism—is certain, or at least, it is unquestioningly to be assumed. Experience may explore it adventurously, and sci-

ence may describe it with precision, but after you have wandered up and down in it for many years, and have gathered all you could of its ways by report, this same world, because it exists substantially and is not invented, remains a foreign thing and a marvel to the spirit; unknowable as a drop of water is unknowable, or unknowable like a person loved.—*Obiter Scripta.*

GEORGE SANTAYANA

Friendship

AS WIDOWERS proverbially marry again, so a man with the habit of friendship always finds new friends. . . . My old age judges more charitably and thinks better of mankind than my youth ever did. I discount idealization, I forgive one-sidedness, I see that it is essential to perfection of any kind. And in each person I catch the fleeting suggestion of something beautiful, and swear eternal friendship with that.—*Persons and Places, Vol. II.*

The Universe

THE UNIVERSE, so far as we can observe it, is a wonderful and immense engine; its extent, its order, its beauty, its cruelty, make it alike impressive. If we dramatize its life and conceive its spirit, we are filled with wonder, terror, and amusement, so magnificent is that spirit, so prolific, inexorable, grammatical, and dull. Like all animals and plants, the cosmos has its own way of doing things, not wholly rational nor ideally best, but patient, fatal, and fruitful. Great is this organism of mud and fire, terrible this vast, painful, glorious experiment. Why should we not look at the universe with piety? Is it not our substance? Are we made of other clay? All our possibilities lie from eternity hidden in its bosom. It is the dispenser of all our joys. We may address it without superstitious terrors; it is not wicked. It follows its own habits abstractedly; it can be trusted to be true to its word. Society is not impossible between it and us, and since it is the source of all our energies, the home of all our happiness, shall we not cling to it and praise it, seeing that it vegetates so grandly and so sadly, and that it is not for us to blame it for what, doubtless, it never knew that it did? Where there is such infinite and laborious potency there is room for every hope. —*Little Essays.*

The Englishman

INSTINCTIVELY the Englishman is no missionary, no conqueror. He prefers the country to the town, and home to foreign parts. He is rather glad and relieved if only natives will remain natives and strangers strangers, and at a comfortable distance from himself. Yet outwardly he is most hospitable and accepts almost anybody for the time being; he travels and conquers without a settled design, because he has the instinct of exploration. His adventures are all external; they change him so little that he is not afraid of them. He carries his English weather in his heart wherever he goes, and it becomes a cool spot in the desert, and a steady and sane oracle amongst all the deliriums of mankind. Never since the heroic days of Greece has the world had such a sweet, just, boyish master. It will be a black day for the human race when scientific blackguards, conspirators, churls, and fanatics manage to supplant him.—*Soliloquies in England.*

The Nature of Love

THE LOFTIEST EDIFICES need the deepest foundations. Love would never take so high a flight unless it sprung from something profound and elementary. It is accordingly most truly love when it is irresistible and fatal. The substance of all passion, if we could gather it together, would be the basis of all ideals, to which all goods would have to refer. Lovers are vividly aware of this fact: their ideal, apparently so inarticulate, seems to them to include everything. It shares the mystical quality of all primitive life. Sophisticated people can hardly understand how vague experience is at bottom, and how truly that vagueness supports whatever clearness is afterward attained. They cling to the notion that nothing can have a spiritual scope that does not spring from reflection. But in that case life itself, which brings reflection about, would never support spiritual interests, and all that is moral would be unnatural and consequently self-destructive. In truth, all spiritual interests are supported by animal life; in this the generative function is fundamental; and it is therefore no paradox, but something altogether fitting, that if that function realized all it comprises, nothing human would remain outside. Such an ultimate fulfillment would differ of course from a first satisfaction, just as all that reproduction reproduces differs from the reproductive function itself, and vastly

exceeds it. All organs and activities which are inherited, in a sense grow out of the reproductive process and serve to clothe it; so that when the generative energy is awakened all that can ever be is virtually called up and, so to speak, made consciously potential; and love yearns for the universe of values.—*Reason in Society.*

GEORGE SANTAYANA

Profound Affinities

THE PROFOUNDEST AFFINITIES are those most readily felt, and they remain a background and standard for all happiness. If we trace them out we succeed. If we put them by, although in other respects we may call ourselves happy, we inwardly know that we have dismissed the ideal, and all that was essentially possible has not been realized. Love in that case still owns a hidden and potential object, and we sanctify perhaps, whatever kindnesses or partialities we indulge in by a secret loyalty to something impersonal and unseen. Such reserve, such religion, would not have been necessary had things responded to our first expectations. We might then have identified the ideal with the object that happened to call it forth. The life of reason might have been led instinctively, and we might have been guided by nature herself into the ways of peace.—*Reason in Society.*

Humanity

MANKIND AT LARGE is also, to some minds, an object of piety. But this religion of humanity is rather a desideratum than a fact: humanity does not actually appear to anybody in a religious light. The *nihil homine homini utilius* remains a single truth, but the collective influence of men and their average nature are far too mixed and ambiguous to fill the soul with veneration. Piety to mankind must be three-fourths pity. There are indeed specific human virtues, but they are those necessary to existence, like patience and courage. Supported on these indispensable habits, mankind always carries an indefinite load of misery and vice. Life spreads rankly in every wrong and impractical direction as well as in profitable paths, and the slow and groping struggle with its own ignorance, inertia, and folly, leaves it covered in every age of history with filth and blood. It would hardly be possible to exaggerate man's wretchedness if it were not so easy to overestimate his sensibility. There is a *fond* of happiness in every bosom, but the depths are seldom probed; and there is no doubt that sometimes frivolity and sometimes sturdy habit helps to keep attention on the surface and to cover up the inner void.—*Reason in Religion.*

The Deceptive Past

THE PAST CANNOT be re-enacted except in the language and with the contrasts imposed by the present. The feelings of children, in particular, although intense, are not ordinarily long-lived or deeply rooted. We cry desperately or we silently hate, for not being allowed to do this or have that; but these objects are trifles. If we remember these occasions they would seem to us indifferent; we should be ashamed to confess those feelings, or we should laugh at them with superior airs: as if the things that now preoccupy us, if we outgrew them, could seem to us more momentous. Thus vast portions of the past—almost all our dreams, almost all our particular thoughts and conversations, become unrecoverable. Our accepted, organized, practically compulsory habits shut them out. But these habits themselves will change more or less with time and with circumstances. Even what we still think we remember will be remembered differently; so that a man's memory may almost become the art of continually varying and misrepresenting his past, according to his interests in the present. This, when it is not intentional or dishonest, involves no deception. Things truly wear those aspects to one another. A point of view and a special lighting are not distortions. They are conditions of vision, and spirit can see nothing not focused in some living eye.—*Persons and Places, Vol. I.*

The Degrees of Delight

I SUPPOSE * * * the most hearty optimist might distinguish degrees of delight. He might say: I delight in bread, but I delight more in bread and butter, and still more in cake; and I delight in a *baba-au-rhum* even more than in dry cake. Yet if you allow yourself to make these odious comparisons, you cast a shadow of inferiority over all delights except the greatest. You might even suspect that the greatest might some day be overshadowed, and that you might mysteriously find yourself preferring not to eat anything. Life and the morality that regulates life seem to require discrimination. They would relax, they would positively dissolve, if delight were spread indiscriminately over an infinite miscellany of commonplaces and there were nothing that you didn't love, nothing that you invincibly hated.—*Persons and Places, Vol. II.*

The Intellectuals

OUR MOST ANXIOUS social class is that known by courtesy as the intellectuals. Indeed public anxiety is often the mark by which you can tell that a person belongs to it; and in many of our higher intellectual circles the fear of a peril to civilization from at least one quarter is a necessary qualification for membership.

Recklessness in the face of contemporary perils is almost unknown among our intellectuals, as is shown in the history of our serious magazines. No serious magazine is ever founded except in the fear of something, and none ever maintains its reputation for seriousness except by the constant expression of anxiety over perils the most diverse. Forty-five separate contemporary perils, any one of which is of itself sufficient to destroy human society, is not an unusual annual average for a serious magazine. Indeed, the most highly esteemed contributions to the weightiest of our magazines at any time in twenty years have all been constructed on this simple formula: *Unless measures are taken at once to avert a certain contemporary peril, civilization will either collapse rapidly or will slowly disappear.* There is the greatest diversity in the perils and in the measures to be taken, but the formula is always the same and the degree of anxiety is constant. A serious contributor will often allow himself a change in the objects of

his apprehension, but never in its quantity. Human society is from his point of view the tenderest of little potted flowers, watered by weekly or monthly tears, surviving by a miracle during the intervals of magazine publication. No serious writer is much regarded nowadays, unless he is battling to keep it alive.—
A Potted Flower.

Women's Opinions

WOMEN, because the main event of their lives has been a giving themselves and giving birth, give all to an opinion as if it were some terrible stone doll. Men take up an opinion lightly and are easily false to it, and when faithful keep the habit of many interests. We still see the world, if we are of strong mind and body, with considerate eyes, but to women opinions become as their children or their sweet-hearts, and the greater their emotional capacity the more do they forget all other things. They grow cruel, as if in defence of lover or child, and all this is done for "something other than human life." At last the opinion is so much identified with their nature that it seems a part of their flesh becomes stone and passes put of life.—*Dramatis Personae*.

The Harm We Do

THE PAIN others give passes away in their later kindness, but that of our own blunders, especially when they hurt our vanity, never passes away. Our own acts are isolated and one act does not buy absolution for another. They are always present before a strangely abstract judgment. We are never a unity, a personality to ourselves. Small acts of years ago are so painful in the memory that often we start at the presence of a little below "the threshold of consciousness" of a thought that remains unknown. It sheds a vague light like that of the moon before it rises, or after its setting. Vanity is so intimately associated with our spiritual identity that whatever hurts it, above all if it came from it, is more painful in the memory than serious sin, and yet I do not think it follows that we are very vain. The harm we do to others is lost in changing events and passes away and so is healed by time, unless it was very great. Looking back I find only one offence which is as painful to me as a hurt to vanity. It was done to a man who died shortly after. Because of his death, it has not been touched by the transforming hand — tolerant Nature has not rescued it from Justice.—*Dramatis Personae.*

The Arts and the People

I NOW SEE that the literary element in painting, the moral element in poetry, are the means whereby the two arts are accepted into the social order and become a part of life and not things of the study and the exhibition. Supreme art is a traditional statement of certain heroic and religious truth, passed on from age to age, modified by individual genius, but never abandoned. The revolt of individualism came because the tradition had become degraded, or rather because a spurious copy had been accepted in its stead. Classical morality—not quite natural in Christianized Europe—dominated this tradition at the Renaissance, and passed from Milton to Wordsworth and to Arnold, always growing more formal and empty until it became a vulgarity in our time—just as classical forms passed on from Raphael to the Academicians. But Anarchaic revolt is coming to an end, and the arts are about to restate the traditional morality. A great work of art, the “Ode to a Nightingale,” not less than the “Ode to Duty,” is as rooted in the early ages as the Mass which goes back to savage folklore. In what temple garden did the nightingale first sing?

* * *

No art can conquer the people alone—the people are conquered by an ideal of life upheld by authority. As this ideal is rediscovered, the arts, music and poetry, painting and literature, will draw closer together.—*Dramatis Personae.*

The Nature of Tragedy

TRAGEDY IS PASSION ALONE, and rejecting character, it gets form from motives, from the wandering of passion; while comedy is the clash of character. Eliminate character from comedy and you get farce. Farce is bound together by incident alone. In practice most works are mixed: Shakespeare being tragic-comedy. Comedy is joyous because all assumption of a part, of a personal mask, whether of the individualized face of comedy or of the grotesque face of farce, is a display of energy, and all energy is joyous. A poet creates tragedy from his own soul, that soul which is alike in all men. It has not joy, as we understand that word, but ecstasy, which is from the contemplation of things vaster than the individual and imperfectly seen, perhaps, by all those that still live. The masks of tragedy contain neither character nor personal energy. They are allied to decoration and to the abstract figures of Egyptian temples. Before the mind can look out of their eyes the active will perishes, hence their sorrowful calm. Joy is of the will which labours, which overcomes obstacles, which knows triumph. The soul knows its changes of state alone, and I think the motives of tragedy are not related to action but to changes of state. I feel this but do not see clearly, for I am hunting truth into its thicket and it is my business to keep close to the impressions of sense, to common daily life. Yet is

not ecstasy some fulfillment of the soul in itself, some slow or sudden expansion of it like an overflowing well? Is not this what is meant by beauty?—*Dramatis Personae*.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

Extreme Opinion

ALL EMPTY SOULS tend to extreme opinion. It is only in those who have built up a rich world of memories and habits of thought that extreme opinions affront the sense of probability. Propositions, for instance, which set all the truth upon one side can only enter rich minds to dislocate and strain, if they can enter at all, and sooner or later the mind expels them by instinct.—*Dramatis Personae*.

The Aristocratic Spirit

HE WAS SEEING more and more clearly that all civilization was an effort, and so far always an inadequate and very partially successful effort. Always it had been aristocratic, aristocratic in the sense that it was the work of minorities, who took power, who had a common resolution against the inertia, the indifference, the insubordination and instinctive hostility of the mass of mankind. And always the setbacks, the disasters of civilization, had been failures of the aristocratic spirit. Why had the Roman purpose faltered and shrivelled? Every order, every brotherhood, every organization carried with it the seeds of its own destruction. Must the idea of statecraft and rule perpetually reappear, reclothe itself in new forms, age, die, even as life does, making each time its almost infinitesimal addition to human achievement? Now the world is crying aloud for a renaissance of the spirit that orders and controls. Human affairs sway at a dizzy height of opportunity. Will they keep their footing there, or stagger? We have got back at last to a time as big with opportunity as the early empire. Given only the will in men and it would be possible now to turn the dazzling accidents of science, the chancy attainments of the nineteenth century, into a sane and permanent possession, a new starting-point. . . . What a magnificence might be made of life!—*The Research Magnificent*.

The Transient

WHAT MOODS, what passions, what nights of despair and gathering storms of anger, what sudden cruelties and amazing tendernesses are buried and hidden and implied in every love story! What a waste is there of exquisite things! So each spring sees a million glorious beginnings, a sunlit heaven in every opening leaf, warm perfection in every stirring egg, hope and fear and beauty beyond computation in every forest tree; and in the autumn before the snows come they have all gone—of all that incalculable abundance of life, of all that hope and adventure, excitement and deliciousness, there is scarcely more to be found than a soiled twig, a dirty seed, a dead leaf, black mould, or a rotting feather.—*The Research Magnificent.*

Lost Ideals

YOU TRAIN MEN to run a machine efficiently, but they cannot guide their own souls. When the labor of their day is over there is a riot of uncultivated senses. Walpurgis nights where everything that is obscene or vulgar meets undisciplined by any memory of beauty. I count it the greatest of tragedies for a man that he should suddenly lose memory so that he could not recollect what songs were sung about his cradle or the dreams of his youth or for what ideal he had labored. And your ideals have brought on many nations the greatest of spiritual tragedies, for they lose memory of their past and do not see the way they came and by what unnumbered dreams they were led.—*The Interpreters.*

Sex in Literature

TO WRITE GROSSLY OF SEX, to labor in a story the physical side of love, is to err esthetically—to over-paint, for the imagination of readers requires little stimulus in this direction, and the sex impulse is so strong that any emphatic physical description pulls the picture out of perspective. A naive or fanatical novelist may think that by thoroughly exploring sex he can reform the human attitude to it, but a man might as well enter the bowels of the earth with the intention of coming out on the other side. If it were not for the physical side of love we should none of us be here, and the least sophisticated of us knows intuitively so much about it that to tell us more except in scientific treatises is to carry coals to Newcastle. But the atmosphere and psychology of passion are other matters, and the trackless maze in which the average reader wanders where his feelings are concerned is none the worse for a night-light or two.—*Candelabra: Selected Essays and Addresses.*

Two Kinds of Men

AS TRULY as that oil and water do not mix, there are two kinds of men. The main cleavage in the whole tale of life in this subtle, all-pervading division of mankind into the man of facts and the man of feeling. And not by what they are or do can they be told one from the other, but just by their attitude toward finality. Fortunately most of us are neither quite the one nor quite the other. But between the pure-blooded of each kind there is real antipathy, far deeper than the antipathies of race, politics, or religion—an antipathy that not circumstance, love, good-will or necessity will ever quite get rid of. Sooner shall the panther agree with the bull than that other one with the man of facts. There is no bridging the gorge that divides these worlds.

Nor is it so easy to tell, of each, to which world he belongs, as it was to place the lady who held out her finger over the gorge called Grand Canyon, and said:

“It doesn’t look thirteen miles; but they measured it just there! Excuse my pointing!”—*Candelabra: Selected Essays and Addresses.*

Sentiment and Sentimentality

SENTIMENT (so far as literature is concerned) may be defined, I suppose, as the just verbal expression of genuine feeling; it becomes sentimentalism when the feeling is not genuine, or when the expression strikes the reader as laid on with too thick a pen. . . .

In any definition of sentiment or sentimentalism, reader, in fact, as well as writer, is involved. That there is nothing absolute in the matter will be admitted even by holders of literary opinions canonized in coterie—nothing more absolute than canonized opinion itself. Time plays skittles with definitions of sentiment as freely as with the views of the criticaster. Not a Victorian novelist, English or American, save perhaps Marryat and Mark Twain, would escape being pilloried as sentimental by the sniffers of today. The cynic of 1870 is the sentimentalist of 1920. The sentimentalist of 1920 may become the cynic of 1970.—*Candelabra: Selected Essays and Addresses.*

Beauty

BEAUTY MEANS this to one person, perhaps, and that to the other. And yet when any one of us has seen or heard or read that which to him is beautiful, he has known an emotion which is in every case the same in kind, if not in degree; an emotion precious and uplifting. A choirboy's voice, a ship in sail, an opening flower, a town at night, the song of the blackbird, a lovely poem, leaf shadows, a child's grace, the starry skies, a cathedral, apple trees in spring, a thoroughbred horse, sheep-bells on a hill, a rippling stream, a butterfly, the crescent moon—the thousand sights or sounds or words that evoke in us the thought of beauty—these are the drops of rain that keep the human spirit from death by drought. They are a stealing and a silent refreshment that we perhaps do not think about but which goes on all the time. The war brought a kind of revolt against beauty in art, literature, and music, a revolt that is already passing, and that I am sure will pass. It would surprise any of us if we realized how much store we unconsciously set by beauty, and how little savour there would be left in life if it were withdrawn. It is the smile on the earth's face, open to all, and needs but the eyes to see, the mood to understand.—*Candela-bra: Selected Essays and Addresses.*

The Faculty of Delight

AMONG THE MIND'S POWERS is one that comes of itself to many children and artists. It need not be lost, to the end of his days, by anyone who has ever had it. This is the power of taking delight in a thing, or rather in anything, everything, not as a means to some other end but just because it is what it is, as the lover dotes on whatever may be the traits of the beloved object. A child in the full health of his mind will put his hand flat on the summer turf, feel it, and give a little shiver of private glee at the elastic firmness of the globe. He is not thinking how well it will do for some game or to feed sheep upon. That would be the way of the wooer whose mind runs on his mistress's money. The child's is sheer affection, the true ecstatic sense of the thing's inherent characteristics. No matter what the things may be, no matter what they are good or no good for, there they are, each with a thrilling unique look and feel of its own, like a face; the iron astringently cool under its paint, the painted wood familiarly warmer, the clod crumbling enchantingly down in the hands, with its little dry smell of the sun and of hot nettles; each common thing a personality marked by delicious differences. . . .

The right education, if we could find it, would work up this creative faculty of delight into all its branching possibilities of knowledge, wisdom and nobility. Of all three it is the beginning, condition, or raw material.—*Disenchantment.*

The Cardinal Virtue of Prose

PROSE OF ITS VERY NATURE is longer than verse, and the virtues peculiar to it manifest themselves gradually. If the cardinal virtue of poetry is love, the cardinal virtue of prose is justice; and, whereas love makes you act and speak on the spur of the moment, justice needs inquiry, patience, and a control even of the noblest passions. . . . By justice here I do not mean justice only to particular people or ideas, but a habit of justice in all the processes of thought, a style tranquillized and a form moulded by that habit. The master of prose is not cold, but he will not let any word or image inflame him with a heat irrelevant to his purpose. Unhasting, unresting, he pursues it, subduing all the riches of his mind to it, rejecting all beauties that are not germane to it; making his own beauty out of the very accomplishment of it, out of the whole work and its proportions, so that you must read to the end before you know that it is beautiful. But he has his reward, for he is trusted and convinces, as those who are at the mercy of their own eloquence do not; and he gives a pleasure all the greater for being hardly noticed. In the best prose, whether narrative or argument, we are so led on as we read, that we do not stop to applaud the writer, nor do we stop to question him.—*Modern Essays*.

Judgments of Value

JUDGMENTS OF VALUE are permanent facts of the human mind from which it cannot escape. Least of all do those escape from it who attack our judgments of value as mere attempts to escape from the bitter truth. For if the truth is bitter, why should we not try to escape from it? If the universe is a cruel practical joke made by nobody, why not baffle the non-existent joker by believing that it is other than it is? Why has the complete sceptic this scorn of illusion, unless it be that he values truth at all costs? That is the deep, unconscious inconsistency of his position. Condemning all our values as delusions, he still preserves, as an unexamined dogma, his own value for truth. The judgment of value is what impels him to condemn other judgments of value; but why should he value truth at all, if the universe be what he maintains it to be?—*Essays on Religion*.

The Spirit of Tragedy

ONLY TWICE IN LITERARY HISTORY has there been a great period of tragedy, in the Athens of Pericles and in Elizabethan England. What these two periods had in common, two thousand years and more apart in time, that they expressed themselves in the same fashion, may give us some hint of the nature of tragedy, for far from being periods of darkness and defeat, each was a time when life was seen exalted, a time of thrilling and unfathomable possibilities. They held their heads high, those men who conquered at Marathon and Salamis, and those who fought Spain and saw the Great Armada sink. The world was a place of wonder; mankind was beauteous; life was lived on the crest of the wave. More than all, the poignant joy of heroism had stirred men's hearts. Not stuff for tragedy, would you say? But on the crest of the wave one must feel either tragically or joyously; one cannot feel tamely. The temper of mind that sees tragedy in life has not for its opposite the temper that sees joy. The opposite pole to the tragic view of life is the sordid view. When humanity is seen as devoid of dignity and significance, trivial, mean and sunk in dreary hopelessness, then the spirit of tragedy departs.—*The Great Age of Greek Literature.*

The Art of Reading

I HAVE FOR YEARS been trying to teach students how to find their way among books. Bacon's trite but useful distinctions between books to be chewed and swallowed and digested and books to be merely tasted is relevant. Cultivate the habit of looking first at the table of contents, or in the index, or the preface, or all three. Select the cardinal or test chapter or chapters. Find the heart of the book. From that center, read back or forward. Not all of any book is equally important. There are speedier and more reliable ways of knowing a book than beginning at Page 1 and reading to Page 637, or wherever those heartening words "The End" greet your tired eye. Some one probably says: "But that is so superficial; I'm always afraid of missing something." I still maintain that when well exercised and practiced it is the most thorough way of reading a book, and the fairest. . . . "No, sir," retorted Dr. Johnson, "do *you* read a book through?" Yet he it was who always "tore the heart out of a book."—*Poetry as a Means of Grace*.

Literary Sense

LITERARY SENSE is closer to common sense than many people suppose. It does not demand a natural talent for words, a ready agility with pen or tongue, a knack for technical criticism. * * * For a genuine sense of literature I would insist rather upon a man's passionate interest in the human individual, on his passionate concern in the spiritual life of man, in the issue between failure and success, between perdition and salvation. Such is the indispensable basis of a full, true and responsive sense of values in literature; for literature is life, with the same scale of values, the same ineluctable laws, the same unerring and beautiful justice.—*Poetry as a Means of Grace.*

Fruits of Solitude

SOLITUDE IS A GREAT CHASTENER when once you accept it. It quietly eliminates all sorts of traits that were a part of you—among others, the desire to pose, to keep your best foot forever in evidence, to impress people as being something you would like to have them think you are even when you aren't. Some men I know are able to pose even in solitude; had they valets they no doubt would be heroes to them. But I find it the hardest kind of work myself, and as I am lazy I have stopped trying. To act without an audience is so tiresome and unprofitable that you become more interested in making the acquaintance of yourself as you really are, which is a meeting that, in the haunts of men, rarely takes place. It is gratifying, for example, to discover that you prefer to be clean rather than dirty even when there is no one but God to care which you are; just as it is amusing to note, however, that for scrupulous cleanliness you are not inclined to make superhuman sacrifices, although you used to believe you were. Clothes you learn, with something of a shock, have for you no interest whatsoever. * * * You learn to regard dress merely as covering, a precaution. For its color and its cut you care nothing.

But the greatest gift in the power of loneliness to bestow is the realization that life does not consist either of wallowing in the past or of peering anxiously

at the future; and it is appalling to contemplate the great number of often painful steps by which one arrives at a truth so old, so obvious, and so frequently expressed. It is good for one to appreciate that life is now. Whatever it offers, little or much, life is now—this day—this hour—and is probably the only experience of the kind one is to have. As the doctor said to the woman who complained that she did not like the night air: “Madam, during certain hours of the twenty-four, night air is the only air there is.” Solitude performs the inestimable service of letting us discover that it is our lives we are at every moment passing through, and not some useless, ugly, interpolated interval between what has been and what is to come. Life does not know such intervals. They can have no separate identity, for they are life itself, and to realize this makes what has seemed long and without value both precious and fleeting. The fleeting may not be just what we once dreamed it might be, but it has the advantage of being present, whereas our past is dead and our future may never be born.
—*Viva Mexico.*

Bedside Books

THERE ARE FEW BOOKS which go with midnight, solitude and a candle. It is much easier to say what does not please right. The book must be, anyhow, something benedictory by a sinning fellow man. Cleverness would be repellent at such an hour. Cleverness, anyhow, is the level of mediocrity today; we are all too infernally clever. The first witty and perverse paradox blows out the candle. Only the sick mind craves cleverness, as a morbid body turns to drink. The late candle throws its beams a great distance; and its rays make transparent much that seemed massy and important. The mind at rest beside that light, when the house is asleep, and the consequential affairs of the urgent world have diminished to their right proportions because we see them distantly from another and a more tranquil place in the heavens, where duty, honor, witty arguments, controversial logic on great questions, appear such as will leave hardly a trace of fossil in the indurated mud which will cover them—the mind then smiles at cleverness.

For though at that hour the body may be dog-tired, the mind is white and lucid, like that of a man from whom a fever has abated. It is bare of illusions. It has a sharp focus, small and starlike, as a clear and lonely flame left burning by the altar of a shrine from which all have gone but one. A book which

approaches that light in the privacy of that place must come, as it were, with open and honest pages.—*Old Junk.*

H. M. TOMLINSON

The Tyranny of Facts

GIVE ME PERMISSION to declare here that mankind is much too concerned with concrete facts which it ought not try to digest. Yet men will try. We long to amass knowledge we cannot use, to prove dates and incidents which prove nothing. We are anxious to get names to things; when we have named them we feel we know them. We want to be sure of the facts and labels, for that gives us a sense of superiority, which is an assurance that we are right. * * *

Yet what if Alfred did not allow the cakes to burn? The cakes which were never made except for a legend at least helps us to remember that once there was a wise and learned king. Legends and myths may retain an essence of life which has evaporated from the parchments and the inscriptions. Nevertheless, if you know the song the sirens sang, you had better hum it to yourself and never name it to anyone, never publish it, or you will begin to doubt you ever heard it. Facts may be labeled and displayed, but not the songs we hum to ourselves.—*The Sea and the Jungle.*

The Greenhorn

PICKWICK GOES THROUGH LIFE with that god-like gullibility which is the key to all adventures. The greenhorn is the ultimate victor in everything; it is he that gets the most out of life. * * * His soul will never starve for exploits or excitements who is wise enough to be made a fool of. He will make himself happy in the traps that have been laid for him; he will roll in their nets and sleep. All doors will fly open to him who has a mildness more defiant than mere courage. The whole is unerringly expressed in one fortunate phrase—he will always be “taken in.” To be taken in everywhere is to see the inside of everything. It is the hospitality of circumstances. With torches and trumpets, like a guest, the greenhorn is taken in by Life. And the sceptic is cast out by it. — *Charles Dickens.*

Three Kinds of People

ROUGHLY SPEAKING, there are three kinds of people in this world. The first kind of people are People; they are the largest and probably the most valuable class. We owe to this class the chairs we sit down on, the clothes we wear, the houses we live in; and, indeed (when we come to think of it), we probably belong to this class ourselves. The second class may be called for convenience the Poets; they are often a nuisance to their families, but, generally speaking, a blessing to mankind. The third class is that of the Professors or Intellectuals, sometimes described as the thoughtful people; and these are a blight and a desolation both to their families and also to mankind. Of course, the classification sometimes overlaps, like all classification. Some good people are almost poets and some bad poets are almost professors. But the division follows lines of real psychological cleavage. I do not offer it lightly. It has been the fruit of more than eighteen minutes of earnest reflection and research.—*On Running After One's Hat.*

The Artistic Temperament

THE ARTISTIC TEMPERAMENT is a disease that afflicts amateurs. It is a disease which arises from men not having sufficient power of expression to utter and get rid of the element of art in their being. It is healthful to every sane man to utter the art within him; it is essential to every sane man to get rid of the art within him at all costs. Artists of a large and wholesome vitality get rid of their art easily, as they breathe easily, or perspire easily. But in artists of less force, the thing becomes a pressure, and produces a definite pain, which is called the artistic temperament. Thus, very great artists are able to be ordinary men—men like Shakespeare or Browning. There are many real tragedies of the artistic temperament, tragedies of vanity or violence or fear. But the great tragedy of the artistic temperament is that it cannot produce any art.—*Heretics*.

The Life Force

THE LIFE FORCE IS VIGOROUS. The delight that accompanies it counter-balances all the pains and hardships that confront men. It makes life worth living, for it works from within and lights with its own bright flame each one's circumstances so that, however intolerable, they yet seem tolerable to him. Much pessimism is caused by ascribing to others the feelings you would feel if you were in their place. It is this (among much else) that makes novels so false. The novelist constructs a public world out of his own private world and gives to the characters of his fancy a sensitiveness, a power of reflection and an emotional capacity, which are peculiar to himself. Most people have little imagination and they do not suffer from circumstances that to the imagination would be unbearable. The lack of privacy, to take an instance, in which the very poor live seems frightful to us who value it; but it does not seem so to the very poor. They hate to be alone; it gives them a sense of security to live in company.—*The Summing Up*.

The Whole Truth

NO ONE CAN TELL the whole truth about himself. It is not only vanity that has prevented those who have tried to reveal themselves to the world from telling the whole truth; it is direction of interest; their disappointment with themselves, their surprise that they can do things that seem to them abnormal, make them place too great an emphasis on occurrences that are more common than they suppose. Rousseau in the course of his "Confessions" narrates incidents that have profoundly shocked the sensibility of mankind. By describing them so frankly he falsified his values and so gave them in his book a greater importance than they had in his life. There were events among a multitude of others, virtuous or at least neutral, that he omitted because they were too ordinary to seem worth recording. There is a sort of man who pays no attention to his good actions, but is tormented by his bad ones. This is the type that most often writes about himself. He leaves out his redeeming qualities and so appears only weak, unprincipled, and vicious.—*The Summing Up.*

Meaning in Life

THE EGOISM OF MAN makes him unwilling to accept the meaninglessness of life and when he has unhappily found himself no longer able to believe in a higher power whose ends he could flatter himself that he subserved he has sought to give it significance by constructing certain values beyond those that seem to further his immediate welfare. The wisdom of the ages has chosen three of these as most worthy. To aim at them for their own sake has seemed to give life some kind of sense. Though it can hardly be doubted that they too have a biologic utility, they have superficially an appearance of disinterestedness which gives man the illusion that through them he escapes from human bondage. Their nobility strengthens his wavering sense of his spiritual significance and, whatever the result, the pursuit of them appears to justify his efforts. Oases in the vast desert of existence, since he knows no other end to his journey, man persuades himself that they are at all events worth reaching and that there he will find rest and the answer to his questions. These three values are Truth, Beauty and Goodness.—*The Summing Up*.

The Value of Art

THE VALUE OF ART, like the value of the Mystic Way, lies in its effects. If it can give only pleasure, however spiritual that pleasure may be, it is of no great consequence or at least of no more consequence than a dozen oysters and a pint of Montrachet. If it is a solace, that is well enough; the world is full of inevitable evils and it is good that man should have some hermitage to which from time to time he may withdraw himself; but not to escape them, rather to gather fresh strength to face them. For art, if it is to be reckoned with as one of the great values of life, must teach man humility, tolerance, wisdom and magnanimity. The value of art is not beauty, but right action. * * *

An art is only great and significant if it is one that all may enjoy. The art of a clique is but a plaything. I do not know why distinctions are made between ancient art and modern art. There is nothing but art. Art is living. To attempt to give an object of art life by dwelling on its historical, cultural, or archaeological associations is senseless. It does not matter whether a statue was hewn by an archaic Greek or a modern Frenchman. Its only importance is that it should give us here and now the aesthetic thrill and that this aesthetic thrill should move us to work. If it is to be anything more than a self-indulgence and an occasion of self-complacency, it must strengthen your character and make it more fitted for right ac-

tion. And little as I like the deduction, I cannot but accept it; and this is that the work of art must be judged by its fruits, and if these are not good it is valueless. It is an odd fact, which must be accepted as in the nature of things and for which I know no explanation, that the artist achieves this effect only when he does not intend it. His sermon is most efficacious if he has no notion that he is preaching one. The bee produces wax for her own purposes and is unaware that man will put it to diverse uses.—*The Summing Up*.

W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM

The Faculty for Myth

THE FACULTY for myth is innate in the human race. It seizes with avidity upon any incidents, surprising or mysterious, in the career of those who have at all distinguished themselves from their fellows, and invents a legend to which it then attaches a fanatical belief. It is the protest of romance against the commonplace of life. The incidents of the legend become the hero's surest passport to immortality. The ironic philosopher reflects with a smile that Sir Walter Raleigh is more safely enshrined in the memory of mankind because he set his cloak for the Virgin Queen to walk upon than because he carried the English name to undiscovered countries.—*The Moon and Sixpence*.

The Opinions of Others

WHEN PEOPLE say they do not care what others think of them, for the most part they deceive themselves. Generally they mean only that they will do as they choose, in the confidence that no one will know their vagaries; and at the utmost only that they are willing to act contrary to the opinion of the majority because they are supported by the approval of their neighbours. It is not difficult to be unconventional in the eyes of the world when your unconventionality is but the convention of your set. It affords you then an inordinate amount of self-esteem. You have the self-satisfaction of courage without the inconvenience of danger. But the desire for approbation is perhaps the most deeply seated instinct of civilized man. No one runs so hurriedly to the cover of respectability as the unconventional woman who has exposed herself to the slings and arrows of outraged propriety. I do not believe the people who tell me that they do not care a row of pins for the opinion of their fellows. It is the bravado of ignorance. They mean only that they do not fear reproaches for peccadilloes which they are convinced none will discover.—*The Moon and Sixpence*.

Defeat and Victory

TURNING SLOWLY, she moved down the walk to the gate, where, far up the road, she could see the white fire of the life-everlasting. The storm and the hag-ridden dreams of the night were over, and the land which she had forgotten was waiting to take her back to its heart. Endurance. Fortitude. The spirit of the land was flowing into her, and her own spirit, strengthened and refreshed, was flowing out again toward life. This was the permanent self, she knew. This was what remained to her after the years had taken their bloom. She would find happiness again. Not the happiness for which she had once longed, but the serenity of mind which is above the conflict of frustrated desires. Old regrets might awaken again, but as the years went on, they would come rarely and they would grow weaker. "Put your heart in the land," old Matthew had said to her. "The land is the only thing that will stay by you." Yes, the land would stay by her. Her eyes wandered from far horizon to horizon. Again she felt the quickening of that sympathy which was deeper than all other emotions of her heart, which love had overcome only for an hour and life had been powerless to conquer in the end,—the living communion with the earth under her feet. While the soil endured, while the seasons bloomed and dropped, while the ancient, beneficent ritual of sowing and reaping moved in the fields, she

knew that she could never despair of contentment.

Strange, how her courage had revived with the sun! She saw now, as she had seen in the night, that life is never what one dreamed, that it is seldom what one desired; yet for the vital spirit and the eager mind, the future will always hold the search for buried treasure and the possibilities of high adventure. Though in a measure destiny had defeated her, for it had given her none of the gifts she had asked of it, still her failure was one of those defeats, she realized, which are victories. At middle age, she faced the future without romantic glamour, but she faced it with integrity of vision. The best of life, she told herself with clear-eyed wisdom, was ahead of her. She saw other autumns like this one, hazy, bountiful in harvests, mellowing through the blue sheen of air into the red afterglow of winter; she saw the coral-tinted buds of the spring opening into the profusion of summer; and she saw the rim of the harvest moon shining orange-yellow through the boughs of the harp-shaped pine. Though she remembered the time when loveliness was like a sword in her heart, she knew now that where beauty exists the understanding soul can never remain desolate.—*Barren Ground.*

The Deep Past

SUDDENLY, WHILE HE MEDITATED, it seemed to him that the shape of the external world, this world of brick and asphalt, of men and women and machines moving, broke apart and dissolved from blown dust into thought. Until this moment he had remembered with the skin of his mind, not with the arteries; but now, when the concrete world disappeared, he plunged downward through a dim vista of time, where scattered scenes from the past flickered and died and flickered again. At eighty-three, the past was always like this. Never the whole of it. Fragments, and then more fragments. No single part, not even an episode, complete as it had happened.

In each hour, when he had lived it, life had seemed important to him; but now he saw that it was composed of things that were little things in themselves, of mere fractions of time, of activities so insignificant that they had passed away with the moment in which they had quivered and vanished. How could any one, he asked, resting there alone at the end, find a meaning, a pattern? Yet, though his mind rambled now, he had walked in beaten tracks in his maturity. His soul, it is true, had been a rebel; but he had given lip-homage, like other men all over the world, to creeds that were husks. Like other men all over the world, he had sacrificed to gods as fragile as the bloom of light on the tulip tree. And what was time itself but

the bloom, the sheath enfolding experience? Within time, and within time alone, there was life—the gleam, the quiver, the heart-beat, the immeasurable joy and anguish of being. . . .—*The Sheltered Life.*

ELLEN GLASGOW

Decay From Within

ALTHOUGH I should be among the last to deny that civilization, as Napoleon said of history, “is a fable agreed upon,” I have learned, from both the past and the present, that nations decay from within more often than they surrender to outward assault. This is an admonitory truism; but it is a truism which we, in common with other races of mankind, have preferred to accept only on credit. We have refused to acknowledge that the disintegration of character is the beginning, not the end, of defeat, or that this weakening moral fiber is first revealed in the quick or slow decline of human relationships, and in the abrupt conversion to a triumphant materialism.—*A Certain Measure.*

Fulfillment

A MULTITUDE OF WOMEN people the earth: fair women, dark women, tall women, short women; kind women, cruel women; warm women, cold women; tender women, sullen women—a multitude of women, and only one among them all had been able to appease the deep unrest in his nature. Only one unit of being, one cluster of living cells, one vital ray from the sun's warmth, only one ripple in the endless cycle of time or eternity, could restore the splintered roots of his life, could bring back to him the sense of fulfillment, completeness, perfection. A single personality out of the immense profusion, the infinite numbers! A reality that eluded analysis! And yet he had been happy as men use the word happiness. Rarely, since his youth, had he remembered that something was missing, that he had lost irrevocably a part from the whole, lost that sense of fulfillment not only in himself but in what men call Divine goodness. Irrevocably—but suppose, after all, the loss were not irrevocable!

Suddenly, without warning, a wave of joy rose from the unconscious depths. Suppose that somewhere beyond, in some central radiance of being, he should find again that ecstasy he had lost without ever possessing. For one heart-beat, while the wave broke and the dazzling spray flooded his thoughts, he told himself that he was immortal, that here on

this green bench in the sun, he had found the confirmation of love, faith, truth, right, Divine goodness. Then, as swiftly as it had broken, the wave of joy spent itself. The glow, the surprise, the startled wonder, faded into the apathetic weariness of the end. He was only an old man warming his withered flesh in the April sunshine. "My life is nearly over," he thought, "but who knows what life is in the end?"

A cloud passed overhead; the changeable blue of the sky darkened and paled; a sudden wind rocked the buds of the tulip tree; and in the street, where life hurried by, a pillar of dust wavered into the air, held together an instant, and then sank down and whirled in broken eddies over the pavement.—*The Sheltered Life.*

Rewards of Reading

WHEN WE ARE YOUNG we read with excitement and wonder, to find out and forecast; experience is all ahead of us. As it comes, our mood changes; we read for pleasure and participation, sometimes for mere relaxation and change. In the third stage, when experience is x per cent behind us, we read for memory and recognition. To check the books by experience, experience by the books. To add up the profit and loss of the years into the final grand balance sheet. —*Under the Bridge: An Autobiography.*

The Mechanical Age

A CERTAIN TYPE of flimsy romantic has been too ready with abuse of a mechanical age, just as a certain type of imaginative writer with a smattering of science has been too gross in his admiration. The machine, when mastered and directed by the human spirit, may lead to a noble enlargement of life. Enterprises which make roads across pathless mountains, collect the waters over a hundred thousand miles to set the desert blossoming, build harbours on harbourless coasts, tame the elements to man's uses—these are the equivalent today of the great explorations and adventures of the past. So, too the patient work of research laboratories, where to the student a new and startling truth may leap at any moment from the void. Those who achieve such things are as much imaginative creators as any poet, as much conquerors as any king. If a man so dominates a machine that it becomes part of him, he may thereby pass out of a narrow world to an ampler ether. The true airman is one of the freest of God's creatures, for he has used a machine to carry him beyond the pale of the Machine. He is a creator and not a mechanic, a master and not a slave.—*Pilgrim's Way.*

Our Heritage From the Past

I HAVE SMALL PATIENCE with the antiquarian habit which magnifies the past and belittles the present. It is a vicious business to look backward unless the feet are set steadfastly on a forward road. Change is inevitable, at once a penalty and a privilege. The greatest of the Ionian philosophers wrote; "It is necessary that things should pass away into that from which they are born. For things must pay one another the penalty of compensation for their injustice according to the ordinances of time." An open and flexible mind, which recognizes the need of transformation and faithfully sets itself to apprehend new conditions, is a prerequisite of man's usefulness. But those who take my point of view will try to bring all change into harmony with the fundamentals drawn from the past. If the past to a man is nothing but a dead hand, then in common honesty he must be an advocate of revolution. But if it is regarded as the matrix of present and future, whose potency takes many forms but is not diminished, then he will cherish it scrupulously and labour to read its lessons, and shun the heady short-cuts which end only in blank walls. He will realize that in the cycle to which we belong we can see only a fraction of the curve, and that properly to appraise the curve and therefore to look ahead, we may have to look back a few centuries to its beginning.—*Pilgrim's Way*.

Men and Women

GIRLS AND WOMEN in their new, their own unfolding will but in passing be imitators of masculine vices and virtues and repeaters of masculine professions. After the uncertainty of such transitions it will become apparent that women only went through the whole range and variety of those (often ridiculous) disguises in order to clean their own most characteristic nature of the distorting influences of the other sex. Women, in whom life lingers and dwells more immediately, more fruitfully and more confidently, must naturally have become fundamentally riper people, more human people, than man who is easy-going, by the weight of no fruit of his body pulled down below the surface of life, and who, presumptuous and hasty, undervalues what he thinks he loves. This humanity of women, carried out in suffering and humiliation, will then, when in the commutations of her external situation she will have stripped off the conventions of being only feminine, come to light, and those men, who do not yet feel it approaching today, will be astonished and stunned by it. Some day (and of this, particularly in the northern countries, reliable signs already clearly speak), some day there will be girls and women whose name will no longer signify merely an opposite of the masculine, but something in itself, something that makes one think, not of any complement

and limit, but of life and existence: the female human being.

This advance will (at first much against the will of the men who have been outstripped) change the experiencing of love, which is now full of error, will alter it from the ground up, reshape it into a relation that is meant to be of one human being to another, no longer of man to woman. And this more human love (that will fulfill itself, infinitely considerate and gentle, and good and clear in binding and releasing) will resemble that which we are with struggle and endeavor preparing, the love that consists in this, that two solitudes protect and touch and greet each other.—*Letters to a Young Poet*. (Translated by M. D. Herter Norton.)

Physical Pleasure

PHYSICAL PLEASURE is a sensual experience no different from pure seeing or the pure sensation with which a fine fruit fills the tongue; it is a great unending experience, that is given us, a knowing of the world, the fulness and the glory of all knowing. And not our acceptance of it is bad; the bad thing is that most people misuse and squander these experiences and take them as a stimulant in the tired spots of their lives and as distraction instead of as a gathering together towards exalted moments. Men have made even eating into something else; want on the one hand, excess upon the other have obscured the distinctness of this necessity, and all the deep, simple urgencies in which life renews itself have become similarly obscured. But the individual can clarify them for himself and live them clearly (and if not the individual, who is too dependent, than at least the solitary man). He can remind himself that all beauty in animals and plants is a quiet enduring form of love and desire, and he can see animals, as he sees plants, patiently and willingly uniting and increasing and growing not out of physical delight, not out of physical suffering, bending to necessities that are greater than pleasure and pain and more powerful than will and understanding. O that man might take this secret, of which the world is full even to its littlest things, more humbly to himself and

bear it, endure it, more seriously and feel how terribly difficult it is, instead of taking it lightly. That he might be more reverent toward his fruitfulness, which is but one, whether it seems mental or physical; for creative work too springs from the physical, is of one nature with it and only like a gentler, more ecstatic and more everlasting repetition of physical delight.—*Letters to a Young Poet*. (Translated by M. D. Herter Norton.)

Nature and the Indians

IN THE WORKING OF SILVER or drilling of turquoise the Indians had exhaustless patience; upon their blankets and belts and ceremonial robes they lavished their skill and pains. But their conception of decoration did not extend to the landscape. They seemed to have none of the Europeans' desire to "master" nature, to arrange and re-create. They spent their ingenuity in the other direction; in accommodating themselves to the scene in which they found themselves. This was not so much from indolence, the Bishop thought, as from an inherited caution and respect. It was as if the great country were asleep, and they wished to carry on their lives without awakening it; or as if the spirits of earth and air and water were things not to antagonize and arouse. When they hunted, it was with the same discretion; an Indian hunt was never a slaughter. They ravaged neither the rivers nor the forest, and if they irrigated they took as little water as would serve their needs. The land and all that it bore they treated with consideration; not attempting to improve it, they never desecrated it.—*Death Comes for the Archbishop.*

The Nature of Art

WHEN THEA took her bath at the bottom of the canyon, in the sunny pool behind the screen of cottonwoods, she sometimes felt as if the water must have sovereign qualities, from having been the object of so much service and desire. That stream was the only living thing left of the drama that had been played out in the canyon centuries ago. In the rapid, restless heart of it, flowing swifter than the rest, there was a continuity of life that reached back into the old time. The glittering thread of current had a kind of lightly worn, loosely knit personality, graceful and laughing. Thea's bath came to have a ceremonial gravity. The atmosphere of the canyon was ritualistic.

One morning, as she was standing upright in the pool, splashing water between her shoulder-blades with a big sponge, something flashed through her mind that made her draw herself up and stand still until the water had quite dried upon her flushed skin. The stream and the broken pottery: what was any art but an effort to make a sheath, a mold in which to imprison for a moment the shining, elusive element which is life itself—life hurrying past us and running away, too strong to stop, too sweet to lose? The Indian women had held it in their jars. In the sculpture she had seen in the Art Institute, it had been caught in a flash of arrested motion. In sing-

ing, one made a vessel of one's throat and nostrils and held it on one's breath, caught the stream in a scale of natural intervals.—*The Song of the Lark.*

WILLA SIBERT CATHER

In Little Towns

IN LITTLE TOWNS, lives roll along so close to one another; loves and hates beat about, their wings almost touching. On the sidewalks along which everybody comes and goes, you must, if you walk abroad at all, at some time pass within a few inches of the man who cheated and betrayed you, or the woman you desire more than anything else in the world. Her skirt brushes against you. You say good-morning, and go on. It is a close shave. Out in the world the escapes are not so narrow.—*Lucy Gayheart.*

Magical Names

THERE ARE MAGICAL NAMES in the history of humanity—names that are like shaken lights or sudden chords of music. They are properly to be called magical because they make an indescribable stir in the mind and provoke excited responses, and awake the sense of wonder. They are not often the names of the good, for Aristides is not a magical name, though St. Francis is; they are rarely the names of the wise, for Confucius is not, though Plato is. They are only sometimes the names of the mighty, for even Constantine is not, though Charlemagne is. They are the names of the beautiful, the strange, the kindred of the gods, of the people who pass easily into legend because we do not question them as to what they achieved while we ponder what they were. It does not much matter what they have done. What they have not done, what they might have done, has usually a rarer quality of rainbow-like radiance. They had enchanting and vibrating personality; and so, though their eyes and hands have long been blown dust in the windy ways of Time, their glances and gestures are caught and carried thrilling down the besetting waves of the immortal ether.—*Leonardo the Florentine.*

Condensers of Time

THERE ARE, OR HAVE BEEN, alchemists with the power to condense time, showing that, like air and unlike water, it has the property of being able to be so treated. Aeschylus, Euripides, Sophocles, Aristophanes and Shakespeare were some of these; they condensed and intensified the events of lifetime so that anyone watching a piece of the work of any of these for a few hours would see and feel with jubilation or in sorrow, but in either case profoundly, as much of the way of man and the behavior toward him of destiny as they would see in reading the most careful record of the whole life of many a man of their own time and country,—*Guerrilla*.

Windows on Life

THE GREAT DAY comes when a man begins to get himself off his hands. He has lived, let us say, in a mind like a room surrounded by mirrors. Every way he turned he saw himself. Now, however, some of the mirrors change to windows. He can see through them to objective outlooks that challenge his interests. He begins to get out of himself—no longer the prisoner of self-reflections but a free man in a world where persons, causes, truths and values exist, worthful for their own sakes. Thus to pass from a mirror mind to a mind with windows is an essential element in the development of real personality. Without that experience no one ever achieves a meaningful life.—*On Being A Real Person.*

The English Character

PEOPLE TALK of the mysterious East, but the West also is mysterious. It has depths that do not reveal themselves at the first gaze. We know what the sea looks like from a distance; it is of one color, and level, and obviously cannot contain such creatures as fish. But if we look into the sea over the edge of a boat, we see a dozen colors, and depth below depth, and fish swimming in them. That sea is the English character—apparently imperturbable and even. The depths and the colors are the English romanticism and the English sensitiveness—we do not expect to find such things, but they exist. And—to continue my metaphor—the fish are the English emotions, which are always trying to get up to the surface, but don't quite know how. For the most part we see them moving far below, distorted and obscure. Now and then they succeed and we exclaim, "Why, the Englishman has emotions! He actually can feel!" And occasionally we see that beautiful creature, the flying fish, which rises out of the water altogether into the air and sunlight. English literature is a flying fish. It is a sample of the life that goes on day after day beneath the surface; it is a proof that beauty and emotion exists in the salt, inhospitable sea.—*Abinger Harvest.*

Letter Writing

GOOD LETTERS are like pearls: they are admirable in themselves, but their value is infinitely enhanced when there is a string of them. Therefore, to be a really great letter writer it is not enough to write an occasional excellent letter; it is necessary to write constantly, indefatigably, with ever-recurring zest; it is almost necessary to live to a good old age. What makes a correspondence fascinating is the cumulative effect of slow, gradual, day-to-day development—the long, leisurely unfolding of a character and a life.—*Characters and Commentaries.*

The Mystery of Words

PERHAPS OF ALL CREATIONS of man language is the most astonishing. Those small articulated sounds, that seem so simple and so definite, turn out, the more one examines them, to be the receptacles of subtle mystery and the dispensers of unanticipated power. Each one of them, as we look, shoots up into

"A palm with winged imagination in it

And roots that stretch even beneath the grave."

It is really a case of Frankenstein and his monster. These things that we have made are as alive as we are, and we have become their slaves. Words are like coins (a dozen metaphors show it), and in nothing more so than in this—that the verbal currency we have so ingeniously contrived has outrun our calculations and become an enigma and a matter for endless controversy. We say something; but we can never be quite certain what it is that we have said.—*Characters and Commentaries.*

The History of Nobility

ARISTOCRATS (no doubt) still exist; but they are shorn beings, for whom the wind is not tempered—powerless, out of place, and slightly ridiculous. For about a hundred years it has been so. The stages in the history of nobility may be reckoned by the different barricades it has put up to keep off the common multitude. The feudal lord used armor to separate him from the rest of the world; then, as civilization grew, it was found that a wig did almost as well; and there was a curious transition period (*temp.* Marlborough) when armor and wigs were worn at the same time. After that, armor vanished, and wigs were left, to rule splendidly through the eighteenth century, until the French Revolution. A fearful moment! Wigs went. Nevertheless, the citadel still held out, for another barrier remained—the barrier of manners; and for a generation it was just possible to be an aristocrat on manners alone. Then, at last, about 1830, manners themselves crumbled, undermined by the insidious permeation of a new—a middle-class—behavior; and all was over.—*Portraits in Miniature and Other Essays.*

Letters

LET US CONSIDER LETTERS—how they come at breakfast, and at night, with their yellow stamps and their green stamps, immortalized by the postmark—for to see one's own envelope on another's table is to realize how soon deeds sever and become alien. Then at last the power of the mind to quit the body is manifest, and perhaps we fear or hate or wish annihilated this phantom of ourselves, lying on the table. Still, there are letters that merely say how dinner's at seven; others ordering coal; making appointments. The hand in them is scarcely perceptible, let alone the voice or the scowl. Ah, but when the post knocks and the letter comes always the miracle seems repeated—speech attempted. Venerable are letters, infinitely brave, forlorn, and lost. . . . Masters of language, poets of long ages, have turned from the sheet that endures to the sheet that perishes, pushing aside the tea-tray, drawing close to the fire (for letters are written when the dark presses round a bright red cave), and addressed themselves to the task of reaching, touching, penetrating the individual heart. Were it possible! But words have been used too often; touched and turned, and left exposed to the dust of the street. The words we seek hang close to the tree. We come at dawn and find them sweet beneath the leaf.—*Jacob's Room.*

Literature and Reality

WHAT IS MEANT by "reality"? It would seem to be something very erratic, very undependable—now to be found in a dusty road, now in a scrap of newspaper in a street, now in a daffodil in the sun. It lights up a group in a room and stamps some casual saying. It overwhelms one walking home beneath the stars and makes the silent world more real than the world of speech—and then there it is again in an omnibus in the uproar of Piccadilly. Sometimes, too, it seems to dwell in shapes too far away for us to discern what their nature is. But whatever it touches, it fixes and makes permanent. That is what remains over when the skin of the day has been cast into the hedge; that is what is left of past time and of our loves and hates. Now the writer, as I think, has the chance to live more than other people in the presence of this reality. It is his business to find it and communicate it to the rest of us. So at least I infer from reading *Lear* or *Emma* or *La Recherche du Temps Perdu*. For the reading of these books seems to perform a curious crouching operation on the senses; one sees more intensely afterwards; the world seems bared of its covering and given an intenser life.—*A Room of One's Own*.

The Shadows We Know

IT SEEMS then that men and women are equally at fault. It seems that a profound, impartial, and absolutely just opinion of our fellow-creatures is utterly unknown. Either we are men, or we are women. Either we are cold, or we are sentimental. Either we are young, or growing old. In any case life is but a procession of shadows, and God knows why it is that we embrace them so eagerly, and see them depart with such anguish, being shadows. And why, if this and much more than this is true, why are we yet surprised in the window corner by a sudden vision that the young man in the chair is of all things in the world the most real, the most solid, the best known to us—why indeed? For the moment after we know nothing about him.

Such is the manner of our seeing. Such the conditions of our love.—*Jacob's Room.*

Birds in Flight

FEW THINGS are more stimulating than the sight of the forceful wings of large birds cleaving the vagueness of air and making the paled clouds a mere background for their concentrated life. The peregrine falcon, becalmed in the blue depths, cruises across space without a tremor of his wide wings. Wild geese beat up the sky in a compact wedge. Primeval force is in their strongly moving wings and their beautiful, outstretched necks, in their power of untiring effort, and the eager search of their wild hearts for the free spaces they love. The good-fellowship of swift, united action, the joy of ten thousand that move as one, is in the flight of flocks of birds. When seagulls flash up from the water with every wing at full stretch there is no deliberation; it is as if each bird saw a sweeping arc before it and followed its individual way faithfully. The unerring judgment of the grand curve when the wings are so near and yet never collide, the speed of the descent, are pure poetry.—*The Spring of Joy*.

Recovering the Past

TO CONJURE, even for a moment, the wistfulness which is the past is like trying to gather in one's arms the hyacinthine color of the distance. But if it is once achieved, what sweetness!—like the gentle fugitive fragrance of spring flowers dried with bergamot and bay. How tears will spring in the reading of old parchment—"to my dear child, my tablets and my ring"—or of yellow letters with the love still fresh and fair in them—"and so good-night, my dearest heart, and God send you happy." That vivid present of theirs, how faint it grows! The past is only the present become invisible and mute its memorial glances are infinitely precious. We are tomorrow's past. Even now we slip away like those pictures painted on the moving dials of antique clocks—a ship, a cottage, a sun, a moon, a nosegay. The dial turns, the ship rides up and sinks again, the yellow painted sun has set, and we, that were the new thing, gather magic as we go.—*Precious Bane.*

The Invisible Wind

UNSEEN ACTIVITY hints of imminent, ungauged power. Isaiah's idea of communion with the Deity was clothed in terms expressing invisible motion. Any stir of life is ominous if we cannot see it, because we are left uncertain as to the strength behind it; rustling in a wood on a moonless night may be caused by slight or overwhelming forces. So it is with the wind—that bodiless voice crying in the great spaces of the air, shouting round our roofs and chimneys, sighing at our windows, yelling above the passion of a storm at sea, fluting in the summer treetops. It is like a whisper in the night, when you cannot tell whether a child or a man is speaking; like some creature flapping at our doors in the gloom. We never see the gates of its dark house swing open, nor watch it fall beyond the waters into its tomb beneath the yellow sunset. Every day since the earth was, the wind has sighed and sung around it, gathering up the laughter and tears of all creatures and taking them into its ageless liberty. More mysterious than the invisible wind is the wind that is simply felt, blowing where there are no trees in which to watch it, pressing upon one with tireless, invincible force. There are few things that bring such awe and delight; for it is stronger than a thousand strong horses, shadowless and secret as a god.—*The Spring of Joy.*

The Curve in Nature

THE WORLD IS BASED ON CURVES; for each of us morning means the growing circle of the sun; we wait in storms for the grand half-circle of the rainbow, which is far more impressive in its governed sweep—embracing the world—than in the flaming of its seven-divided colours. There is nothing so restful as a perfect circle, whether seen, as in the full moon, or implied, as in the young crescent. It is a symbol of things men feel but cannot understand; so Merlin “made the round table in tokening of the roundness of the world”; so Vaughan saw eternity “like a great Ring.” Nearly all essential things are round—the perianth of flowers, where the seed is, stars, the window of the eye. Lines, after all, are only for measuring circles; the diameter of the earth is unimportant in itself. Though perspective has an extraordinary power of bringing wonder—hunger for the far away, fear of the future—it must be a long perspective; a piece of road or a tree must attain a certain length or height before it haunts the imagination. But a circle, however small, is immutable, holds infinity; because of this, and because of the implied centre, it is the most perfect symbol of Divinity.

All green things that have to cleave their way come into the light like swords — grass, leaves emerging from the sheath, shoots splitting the bark—all these are pointed. In the outermost branch and the top-

most twig of a tree the point sharply defines the limit of the individual form as it stands against the vagueness of air. The point is where thought slips from the finite to the infinite, like a bird balanced on the top of a fir-tree before he thrusts himself to immensity. "At the point of death" has in it something of this idea of the sudden ending of a form, where the topmost shoot of mortality ceases upon the eternal. The circle is static, the point dynamic.—*The Spring of Joy.*

MARY WEBB

Calls and Answers

INSECTS ARE THE ARTISTS of fragrance; they have a genius for it; there seems to be some affinity between the tenuity of their being and this most refined of the sense-impressions. Ghostly calls summon them to their banquets. The crane's-bill has a word for the gnat; the helleborine fills her goblet only for the wasp; the yellow iris calls to the honey-fly; the meadow saffron's veined cup is for the bee. Moths call each other by scent; so do bees; and probably the smallest ephemera follow the same law. These calls and answers cross the world continually, like a web of fine threads, most of them too slight for our comprehension.—*The Spring of Joy.*

The Priesthood of Art

THIS IS THE PRIESTHOOD OF ART—not to bestow upon the universe a new aspect, but upon the beholder a new enthusiasm. At our doors every morning the creation is sung. The day is a drama, the night is an unfolding mystery within whose shadowy arena impetuous life shall still contend with death. A world laughs and bleeds for us all the time, but our response in this meteoric theatre we suffer to be drugged with business and decorum. We are born sleeping and few of us ever awake, unless it is upon some hideous midnight when death startles us and we learn in grief alone what bit of Olympian fire our humid forms enwrapped. But we could open our eyes to joy also. The poet cried “Awake!” and sings the song of the morning. He that hath eyes let him see! —*The Enjoyment of Poetry.*

Poetry and Life

OF ALL THINGS poetry is most unlike deadness. It is unlike ennui, or sophistication. It is a property of the alert and beating hearts. Those who are so proud that they cannot enter precipitately into the enterprise of being, are too great for poetry. Poetry is unconditionally upon the side of life. But it is also upon the side of variety in life. It is the offspring of a love that has many eyes, as many as the flowers of the field. There is no poetry for him whose look is straitened, and his heart lives but to the satisfaction of a single taste. He had the power of poetry and lost it.—*The Enjoyment of Poetry.*

Rhythm

MUSIC IS WINE to the imagination. And the essence of music, originally and in this respect, is rhythm, or the regular recurrence of a pleasant stroke. The trance-engendering power of such recurrence, however it may be explained, was anciently known and is easily verified. Patting and stroking are nature's anodynes. We rock our babies to sleep, we smooth the foreheads of the fretful, and we love to slide into oblivion ourselves, carrying with us the continual tirl of rain-drops on a roof, or beneath us in the darkness the murmur of a brook. . . .

There is, perhaps, a yet more original and more broad connection between rhythm and all realization. It seems as if there must be, because rhythm is used, not only to lull the body, and set free the imagination, but also, like wine itself, to excite the body to the last degree of the intensity of real experience. These are the two primitive uses of the recurrent stimulus, and somehow they both survive in poetry. The very metrical monotony that drowns us becomes, when we are lost to coarser things, a turbulent and stimulating stream along our veins. And no theory will ever adequately unfold the magic of such utterance that does not grant and reconcile these two effects.—*The Enjoyment of Poetry.*

Our Age of Psychology

OUR AGE OF PSYCHOLOGY is not an age of interest in human nature. Think of the excited wonder with which the novels of Dickens and Balzac were written, a wonder that vibrates in their pages. This is the trait that also gives life to the great portraits of Ingres, Beechey and Gilbert Stuart, as of Velasquez and Rembrandt. No matter how good our novels and portraits may be, in every other respect, they lack this relish for character which has stamped all the enduring novels and portraits. Our novelists turn their characters inside out, and sometimes describe them inimitably, but can one imagine a writer of our time laughing and weeping over his characters, living their lives and sharing their feelings as Victor Hugo and Thackeray lived the lives of their men and women?

This excited wonder over human nature was one of the marks of the Victorian age, as of all the ages of energy. Is there a portrait-photographer living who has an eye for character comparable to David Octavius Hill's? Stieglitz has an eye for certain types, but he is more interested in other matters. The aim and the effect of most of our portrait-photographers is to make their sitters conform to a preconceived type—they all emerge from the camera as captains of industry or as pretty women, when they are not decorative arrangements. Well spoke Emerson, writ-

ing to Carlyle, about his "thirsty eyes," his "portrait-eating, portrait-painting eyes." All the great novelists and portrait-painters, Carlyle and Taine among them, have "eaten" their characters in this way. As for modern painters,—Derain, for example,—most of them make their subjects look like dolls.

In no respect does it appear more clearly that ours is not an age of energy than in this indifference to character. The seventeenth century, like the nineteenth, was an age of energy. That is why Cromwell insisted that the artist who painted him should put in all the warts.

Psychology is one thing, and it is the dominant thing today. Perception and feeling are something else, and they are dominant in the great ages.—*Opinions of Oliver Allston.*

Dunkерque

SO LONG as the English tongue survives, the word Dunkerque will be spoken with reverence. For in that harbour, in such a hell as never blazed on earth before, at the end of a lost battle, the rags and blemishes that have hidden the soul of democracy fell away. There, beaten but unconquered, in shining splendour, she faced the enemy.

They sent away the wounded first. Men died so that others could escape. It was not so simple a thing as courage, which the Nazis had in plenty. It was not so simple a thing as discipline, which can be hammered into men by a drill sergeant. It was not the result of careful planning, for there could have been little. It was the common man of the free countries, rising in all his glory out of mill, office, factory, mine, farm and ship, applying to war the lessons learned when he went down the shaft to bring out trapped comrades, when he hurled the lifeboat through the surf, when he endured poverty and hard work for his children's sake.

This shining thing in the souls of free men Hitler cannot command, or attain, or conquer. He has crushed it, where he could, from German hearts.

It is the great tradition of democracy. It is the future. It is victory.—*The New York Times*, June 1, 1940.

Old Lands and New

WE EUROPEANS FIND the Orient stale and yet too luxuriantly fetid by reason the multitude of bygone lives and thoughts, oppressive with the crowded presence of the dead, both men and gods. So, I imagine, a Canadian would feel our woods and fields heavy with the past and the invisible, and suffer claustrophobia in an English countryside beneath the dreadful pressure of immortals. For his own forests and wild places are wind-swept and empty. That is their charm, and their terror. You may lie awake all night and never feel the passing of evil presences, nor hear printless feet; neither do you lapse into slumber with the comfortable consciousness of those friendly watchers who sit invisibly by a lonely sleeper under an English sky. . . .

The maple and the birch conceal no dryads, and Pan has never been heard amongst these reed beds. Look as long as you like upon a cataract of the New World, you shall not see a white arm in the foam. A godless place. And the dead do not return. That is why there is nothing lurking in the heart of the shadows, and no human mystery in the colors, and neither the same joy nor the kind of peace in dawn and sunset that older lands know. It is, indeed, a new world. How far away seem those grassy, moonlit places in England that have been Roman camps or roads, where there is always serenity, and the spirit

of a purpose at rest, and the sunlight flashes upon more than flint! Here one is perpetually a first-comer. The land is virginal, the wind cleaner than elsewhere, and every lake new-born, and each day is the first day. The flowers are less conscious than English flowers, the breezes have nothing to remember, and everything to promise. There walk, as yet, no ghosts of lovers in Canadian lanes. This is the essence of the grey freshness and brisk melancholy of this land. And for all the charm of those qualities, it is also the secret of a European's discontent. For it is possible, at a pinch, to do without gods. But one misses the dead.—*Letters From America.*

In Brittany

WHAT VIGILS have these great dunes been keeping through the ages? Slowly, as the sea changes, do these billowing breasts of sand rise and fall and shift their silhouettes so silently, so slowly, that men cannot discern or date their heavings or their hollows. It is enough to lie between them under the sun, within their warm ineffable embrace, and feel the streak of golden sunlight draw its blade ever so slowly across your burning body.

During the winter the ageless depths of sea-drenched sand, ground fine and tempered by the wind and sun, are suddenly torn up and whirled away by cyclonic power; and endless conflict rages over this primitive coast: sea, wind, sun, each triumphant in its appointed time.

It is in these primitive surroundings that we may become almost unconsciously attuned to the phenomena of natural forces—our inner mind hears the choir of invisible voices; all the noise and distraction of daily life is blotted out and one has a sense of renewal and courage. It is perhaps because of our desperate need of such renascence that we seek the extremes of solitude and silence from which we may learn to “tap in on the Infinite” and gain a true perspective on our finite values, so often distorted by habit and convention.—*Heads and Tales.*

Autobiography

THERE IS NO HIDING-PLACE so impenetrable as autobiography, whether written or spoken; for autobiography is truth at two removes from the actual—the story behind the story; and the curious reader or listener who seeks the way back to the actual finds that it is by a hundred unblazed crossroads. To the acute mind, the man who hides in silence is never so puzzling as the man who hides in a perpetual flow of talk: ten thousand clues are of less use than none; and any man who is in danger of attention from posterity, and wishes to hide certain things, will find no better hiding-place than under the arc-lights of autobiography. Borrow hid himself there. Byron lived his whole life in public, talking about himself; nobody knew Byron. Walt Whitman shouted his soul to the world; and the man Walt Whitman is as misty to us as though he were the mummy of a King of Thebes. Against the secretiveness of his personal life De Quincey set the public outpouring of confession, and by using both methods he completely hid himself.—*Introduction to the Ecstasies of Thomas De Quincey.*

The Human Being

WHAT THEN, is a human being? Hubbard, looking over his notes, had to ask himself. How might one attempt to describe the incredible phenomenon? A creature alternating sixteen hours of mischief with eight hours of innocence; aware of death at every street-crossing, yet rarely scathed; a moving eddy of self-consciousness wasting most of its time in irrelevant necessities and seizing desperately upon casual laughter. A toy balloon blown into the Park—a blind man singing on the street, a spark when the key meets the lock it fits. Then, engrossed in this impossible inquiry, the biographer became more antic. It was not likely that the ultimate definition, having eluded Aesop, the Bible, Shakespeare, and all the French aphorists, would accidentally run down from the small black cistern of Lawrence Hubbard's Roepen. But he was happy, very happy, in watching what came forth. A human being, he wrote, is a whispering in the steam pipes on a cold night; dust sifted through a locked window; one or other half of an unsolved equation; a pun made by God; an ingenious assembly of portable plumbing; a folder of Unfinished Business; a mob of intuitions governed by foreigners; a parliamentary body in which the minority is always right; a tropical island with a high protective tariff; a temporary compromise between the impulses of self-preservation and self-

destruction; a diminishing variable of Certainty; a superb actor in a hokum play; the chorus of a song whose verse every one has forgotten; a trained animal who distrusts his trainer; the only animal concerned to identify itself.—*Human Being*.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

The Opiate, Memory

A SWEET and dangerous opiate is Memory; it is well that we are rarely addicted to it. Even the briefest indulgence confuses the sense of present reality. That busy dream-life has no existence save by deliberate will, yet you can instantly create a whole world and ensphere it in empty nothing for a pause of brooding power. Yes, it can be done in the bliss of anxious thought, but to clench it in words is dreadful. I honor words and they come with difficulty. But memory is something subtler than words, of anterior substance; it lives behind the forehead and not in the lips. It floats an instant in the mind like a smoldering, then spreads and thins and sifts apart. If mood and moment could be found when people could just sit down, in mutual passiveness, and say, "I remember . . ." what matter might come forth. How seldom it happens; what infinite instruction it might contain.—*John Mistletoe*.

Uncharted Experience

I HAVE BEEN THINKING about islands, those explosions of apparently uncharacteristic experience that occur in certain lives. Most of the people we know are terribly afraid of such islands. They see one looming ahead and they hurriedly steer off in another direction. In order to save one's life, as has been said, one must be willing to let it be tossed away, and not many of us are willing. All well-brought-up people are afraid of having any experience which seems to them uncharacteristic of themselves as they imagine themselves to be. Yet this is the only kind of experience that is really alive and can lead them anywhere worth going. New, strange, uncharacteristic uncharted experience, coming at the needed moment, is sometimes as necessary in a person's life as a plow in a field. Yet those people who are most capable of continuous development, because of their rich and fastidious and subtle natures, seem to feel a passionate fear and resentment of any really new experience. Change must always come, to them and in them, evenly and slowly and always in a given direction. If it takes a sudden sharp turn, or seems to be leading them into a place that they think is not fit for them, they refuse to follow it. Oh, lucky beyond most human beings is the refined and well-brought-up person who comes upon an utterly unfamiliar island flat in the middle of his fate line, and who is bold and

crazy enough to defy the almost overwhelming chorus of complacency and inertia and other people's ideas and to follow the single, fresh, living voice of his own destiny, which at the crucial moment speaks aloud to him and tells him to come on.—*The Little Locksmith.*

"Not Just This Way"

SUDDENLY EVERYTHING seemed completely natural. There was a simple way to get away from all the rest of it and he kissed her. It was not entirely desire, it was because he knew that something of the sort was inevitable. There had been even some sort of graceless, perfunctory idea of getting it over with, now that they were there. Yet it was entirely different when the time came. He had never thought that anything would be like that for him again. When his arms were around her, everything that he had lost and forgotten seemed to come back to him from all sort of distant places.

"Darling," she said, "are you feeling better now?"

"Yes," he said, "much better," but he did not want to speak.

He wanted to be silent, to deal with his own surprise that that sort of thing was not over with him long ago. What astonished him most was that he felt no qualm of disloyalty. Something in that talk with Madge seemed to him very final, leaving him free to do anything he wanted.

"Don't," he said to her, "don't speak a line."

"I don't want to talk at all," she said. "It's never happened to two people just this way, ever."

"No," he said, "not just this way."

It must have been what everyone had said. It was

that sad human desire to keep individuality out of universal experience. Yet even so, he knew that he would always believe that nothing like that had happened in just that way before.—*So Little Time.*

JOHN P. MARQUAND

The "Little People"

HE WAS THINKING that everybody now wrote and talked about the Little People, and that the Little People were a new discovery in creative literature, and no doubt a wholesome one, but he wished that their discoverers would not invariably refer to them as *Little People*. It seemed to him that the Little People themselves would have every right to resent it, for the phrase, if you stopped to think of it, implied an intolerable sort of patronage. It was the way Beckie referred to the little grocer and the little cabinetmaker and the little village. It tacitly implied that you yourself were not quite so little, and actually no one, if you got to know him, was a little person. The phrase was snobbish and undemocratic, and yet it was used most frequently by mouthpieces of democracy.—*So Little Time.*

A Note on Our Age

IN THE PAST there was an age of Shakespeare, of Voltaire, of Dickens. Ours is the age not of any poet or thinker or novelist but of the Document. Our Representative Man is the traveling newspaper correspondent who dashes off a best seller between two assignments. "Facts speak for themselves!" Illusion! Facts are ventriloquist's dummies. Sitting on a wise man's knee they may be made to utter words of wisdom; elsewhere they say nothing or talk nonsense or indulge in sheer diabolism.—*Time Must Have a Stop.*

Light Loves

ON LOVE regarded as an amusement the last word is surely this of Robert Burns:

*I waive the quantum of the sin,
The hazard of concealing;
But oh! it hardens all within
And petrifies the feeling.*

Nothing is more dreadful than a cold, unimpassioned indulgence. And cold and unimpassioned love infallibly becomes when it is too lightly made. It is not good, as Pascal remarked, to have too much liberty. Love is the product of two opposed forces—of an instinctive impulsion, and a social resistance acting on the individual by means of ethical imperatives justified by philosophical or religious myths. When, with the destruction of the myths, resistance is removed, the impulse wastes itself on emptiness; and love, which is only the product of conflicting forces, is not born.—*Do What You Will.*

The Inner Crisis

THE INNER CRISIS in our civilization must be resolved before the outer crisis can be effectively met. Our first duty is to revamp our ideas and values and to reorganize the human personality around its highest and most central needs. If we ask ourselves as we face the future, not how to keep our old institutions and organizations running in their accustomed grooves, but how to keep life itself running, with or without the aid of these institutions, our problem immediately clarifies itself. There is no wealth, as Ruskin said, but life; and there is no consummation of life except in the perpetual growth and renewal of the human person; machines, organizations, institutions, wealth, power, culture, cities, landscapes, industries, are all secondary instruments in that process. Whatever nourishes the personality, humanizes it, refines it, deepens it, intensifies its aptitude and broadens its field of action is good: Whatever limits it or thwarts it, whatever sends it back into tribal patterns and limits its capacity for human cooperation and communion must be counted as bad. Nothing that man has created is outside his capacity to change, to remold, to supplant, or to destroy: His machines are no more sacred or substantial than the dreams in which they originated.—*The Condition of Man.*

Modern Man's Illusions

THE WAR ITSELF has shocked people into facing the grimmest of realities, but it is not in itself sufficient to promote an understanding of the forces that have prompted this world catastrophe. In its later phases the war has caused people to accept the hardest sacrifice of all, and that is, to give up their illusions about this civilization. Modern man is the victim of the very instruments he values most. Every gain in power, every mastery of natural forces, every scientific addition to knowledge, has proved potentially dangerous because it has not been accompanied by equal gains in self-understanding and self-discipline. We have sought to achieve perfection by eliminating the human element. Believing that power and knowledge were by nature beneficent or that man himself was inherently good when freed from external obligations to goodness, we have conjured up a genius capable of destroying our civilization. The disproportionate development of the sciences themselves only hastens this malign end.—*The Condition of Man.*

The Fact of Death

ALL THE QUESTIONS man asks about his life are multiplied by the fact of death: for man differs from all other creatures, it would seem, in being aware of his own death and in never being fully reconciled to sharing the natural fate of all living organisms. The tree of knowledge, with its apple that gave man awareness of good and evil, also grew a more bitter fruit man wrenched from its branches: the consciousness of the shortness of the individual life and the finality of death. In his resistance to death man has often achieved a maximum assertion of life; like a child at the sea's edge working desperately to build up the walls of his sand castle before the next wave breaks over it, man has often made death the center of his most valued efforts, cutting temples out of the rock, heaping pyramids high above the desert, transposing the mockeries of human power into visions of god-like omnipotence, translating human beauty into everlasting stone, human experience into printed words and time itself, arrested in art, into a simulacrum of eternity.—*The Condition of Man.*

The Inner Man

WE DO NOT KNOW A NATION until we know its pleasures of life, just as we do not know a man until we know how he spends his leisure. It is when a man ceases to do the things he has to do, and does the things he likes to do, that the character is revealed. It is when the repressions of society and business are gone and when the goads of money and fame and ambition are lifted, and man's spirit wanders where it listeth, that we see the inner man, his real self.—*My Country and My People.*

Climate and Man

THE PLACE OF MAN'S BIRTH is unknown; but in poetic dreams (as if dimly remembering) man yearns back toward some land benign and equable, far from the path of storms. Such was the Earthly Paradise. Such was Lotus-Land, and that far country of Those-Beyond-the-North-Wind. Such was the Isle of Apples, Avalon:

*Where falls not hail or rain or any snow
Nor ever wind blows loudly.*

Still, near the tropics, such regions may be found; in milder epochs they spread far toward the Poles.

Even yet, man seems to carry with him memories of some idyllic past. In his mind a grasshopper, each summer he assumes that the ever-blooming tropics will surround him. Only by hard-won wisdom, not by racial aptitude, does he lay up for the future. The birds fly south without waiting for frost; the bear stores up fat to hibernate; the bee and the beaver hoard food. If such creatures had grave and reverend philosophers, they might teach more concern with the present, and less with the future. But the average man always has difficulty in getting round to mend the roof in dry weather.—*Storm.*

Names on the Land

IN THE DISTANT PAST, then, the land was without names. Yet the nature of the land itself prefigured something of what was to be. Where jagged mountains reared up along the horizon, many names would describe shapes, but in a flat country names of other meanings would be given. Where most streams were clear but one ran thick with reddish mud, a man coming to that stream would call it Red River, whether he said Rio Colorado, or Riviere Rouge, or Bogue Homa, or blurted syllables in some now long-forgotten tongue. Since alders first grew close to water and desert-cedars clung to hillsides, they predestined Alder Creek and Cedar Mountain. Long Lake and Stony Brook, Blue Ridge and Grass Valley, lay deeper than tribe or language; the thing and the name were almost one.

No one knows when man came, or who gave the first names. Perhaps the streams still ran high from the melting ice-cap, and strange beasts roamed the forest. And since names—corrupted, transferred, remade—outlive men and nations and languages, it may even be that we still speak daily some name which first meant “Saber-tooth Cave” or “Where-we-killed-the-ground-sloth.”

There is no sure beginning. At the opening of history many and various tribes already held the land, and had given it a thin scattering of names. The names themselves can be made to reveal the manner of the earliest naming.—*Names on the Land.*

How Place Names Began

ONCE, LET US SAY, some tribesmen moved toward a new country, which was unknown to them. Halting, they chose a good man, and sent him ahead. This scout went on, watching not to be ambushed or get lost, knowing he must report shrewdly when he returned. First he skulked along the edge of a big meadow, where he saw many deer. Then he came to a stream where he noted some oak trees, which were uncommon in that country. All this time he was skirting the slope of a great mountain, but because he was actually on it, and because the trees were so thick, he did not think of a mountain; and besides, it made no difference to him one way or the other. So he went farther on—through a little swamp, and to a stream which he crossed on a beaver-dam. This stream was the same as the one where the oak trees grew, but he had no way of being certain, and besides it did not matter at all—each crossing was a thing in itself. He went on, through a narrow defile with many tall rocks, which he knew would be an ugly spot for an ambush. Going back, he noted all the places in reverse, but did not actually bestow any names on them.

When he told his story, however, he unconsciously gave names by describing places, such as the big meadow and the stream where the oak trees grew. He did not speak of the mountain, because the

mountain was everywhere and the whole country was merely its slope; and he did not speak of the deer in the meadow, because he knew that deer are at one place for sun-up and another for nooning, so that only a fool would try to distinguished one meadow from another by mentioning them.

The others listened to his words, nodded and questioned and remembered; they knew that they would have no other knowledge of the next day's march, and that life and death might hang on how well they remembered his landmarks. So they thought to themselves, "big meadow," "stream where oak trees grow," "stream with a beaver-dam," and the rest. When they went ahead into that country, they recognized each place as they came to it.

Then, when they lived there, they used the descriptions first, saying, "There is good fishing in the stream where oak trees grow." But soon they said, "stream-where-oak-trees-grow" in one breath, and it had become a name,—*Namês on the Land*.

The Names May Still Remain

THE LAND HAS BEEN NAMED, and the names are rooted deep. Lake Mead may fill with slit, and Lake Michigan again spill south to the Gulf—but the names may still remain. Let the conqueror come, or the revolution rage; many of our names have survived both already, and may again. Though the books should be burned and the people themselves be cut off, still from the names—as from arrowheads and potsherds—the patient scholar may piece together some record of what we were.

So after an age has passed, man (that curious mammal) may come again, piecing out the altered syllables, reading the names. By -ville and -burg he will know that here the Americans once passed. By Delmar and Texarkana he will trace forgotten boundaries. By Atco and Alcoa he will plot long-vanished industries. Lexington, Missouri, Fort Wayne—here, he will say, lived Americans, red men with scalp-locks, farmers with muskets firing from behind stone walls. Washington, Jefferson City, Lincoln—in some changed form he will read the names, and ask, “Were they men or gods?” Yes, here passed the Americans—tall men in coon-skin caps selling beaver-pelts, fat men in horn-rimmed glasses selling sub-divisions—Ten Mile Creek, Little Round Top, Mount Pleasant and Richland. After all else has passed, the names may yet remain.—*Names on the Land.*

Humanity's Problems

IT IS INDEED STRANGE that whereas each of us accepts the existence of insoluble personal problems, we can hardly bear to think that there may be no ideal solution for the problems of humanity as a whole. Individuals go on living with equanimity in spite of chronic bad health, money difficulties, inextricable family troubles or mental suffering of one kind or another. Yet each of these individuals who so bravely bears his own personal problems without being able to solve them cannot suffer the idea that there can be no way of curing the ills of the world. If we can accept the thought that perfect happiness for the individual is not accessible on this earth (and who but a fool can think otherwise) we must believe nevertheless in the reality of the millennium.

It would be a great waste of time to argue whether this belief makes sense or not. But the fact that it exists and that, in modern times, it has constantly gained strength is a mystery which reaches to the very roots of the genius of man. It is a mystery, but also a tremendous force which explains why men, in spite of their individual cares and sufferings, are nevertheless able to rise above them at certain times for the sake of greater things than themselves. It explains why men fight and die against desperate odds and thus preserve the grandeur and dignity of voluntary sacrifice.—*The Making of Tomorrow.*

Philosophies of Life

A SIMPLE SERENITY is not a philosophy. But quite outside the technical circles men have arrived at what may more properly be called such. I rather wish certain men of affairs I know had set down their philosophies. The Boston surgeon, for instance, who, having been so much involved in crises of life and death, had arrived at a general sense of what life held and what its limits were. . . .

It seems to me rather a pity that so many men who have known the world, and been prompted to reflect upon its meaning, should not have tried to put that meaning down. Doctors, lawyers and statesmen have taken to writing their autobiographies. I wish it would become a mode for them to write their views of Nature, or their conceptions of life. The best of them, I am sure, would be contributors to philosophy; their wisdom might be a little too much of this world, but it would be wisdom, and at the very least, it would be interesting to know what our conquerors thought of the meaning of the world they had conquered.—*Philosopher's Holiday*.

Nature and Man

TO BE SENTIMENTAL would, in Nature, be suicidal; if there is no compassion in it, neither is there any persecution. You cannot find in Nature anything evil, save as you misread it by human standards. Anger blazes in a fight between two bull moose; anger then is a plain preservative measure, the fear which is the safeguard of all living. Together, these primary emotions bare the fang, they tense the muscles in the crouching haunch. You may call that hate, if you will, but it is brief and honest, not nursed in the dark like ours. In all of Nature, which fights for life because it loves life, there is nothing like human war.

We alone are responsible for the existence of cruelty, in the sense of maliciously inflicted pain. This is one of man's inventions—of which so many are already obsolete. . . . In this present agony of mankind, men talk, shuddering, of "going back to the ways of the beasts." Let them consider the beasts' way, which is cleanly and reasonable, free of dogmas, creeds, political or religious intolerances. Let no one think he will find in Nature justification for human evil, or precedent for it. Or, even among our natural enemies, any but fair fighting.—*The Road of a Naturalist.*

Spring's Beginnings

THE BEGINNINGS OF SPRING, the true beginnings, are quite unlike the springtides of which poets and musicians sing. The artists become conscious of spring in late April, or May, when it is not too much to say that the village idiot would observe that birds are singing and nesting, that fields bear up their freight of flowering and ants return to their proverbial industry.

But the first vernal days are younger. Spring steals in shyly, a tall, naked child in her pale gold hair, amidst us the un-innocent, skeptics in wool mufflers, prudes in gumshoes and Grundies with head colds. Very secretly the old field cedars sow the wind with the freight of their ancient pollen. A grackle in the willow croaks and sings in the uncertain ragged voice of a boy. The marshes brim, and walking is a muddy business. Oaks still are barren and secretive. On the lilac tree only the twin buds suggest her coming maturity and flowering. But there in the pond float the inky masses of those frog's eggs, visibly life in all its rawness, its elemental shape and purpose. Now is the moment when the secret of life could be discovered, yet no one finds it.—*An Almanac for Moderns.*

The Sum of Misery

WE MUST NEVER MAKE the problem of pain worse than it is by vague talk about the "unimaginable sum of human misery." Suppose that I have a toothache of intensity x : and suppose that you, who are seated beside me, also begin to have a toothache of intensity x . You may, if you choose, say that the total amount of pain in the room is now $2x$. But you must remember that no one is suffering $2x$: search all time and all space and you will not find that composite pain in anyone's consciousness. There is no such thing as a sum of suffering, for no one suffers it. When we have reached the maximum that a single person can suffer, we have, no doubt, reached something very horrible, but we have reached all the suffering there ever can be in the universe. The addition of a million fellow-sufferers adds no more pain.—*The Problem of Pain*.

The Stages of Love

YOU WOULD NOT ASK that if you had been married, or even if you had studied generation among the beasts. Do you not know how it is with love? First comes delight; then pain; then fruit. And then there is joy of the fruit, but that is different again from the first delight. And mortal lovers must not try to remain at the first step: for lasting passion is the dream of a harlot and from it we wake in despair. You must not try to keep the raptures: they have done their work. Manna kept, is worms.—*The Pilgrim's Regress*.

The Day of Days

THERE IS A STANZA in Robert Frost's poem "Two Tramps in Mud Time" which describes an April moment when air and sky have a vernal feeling, but suddenly a cloud crosses the path of the sun and a bitter little wind finds you out, and you're back in the middle of March. Everyone who has lived in the country knows that sort of moment—the promise of warmth, the raised hope, the ruthless rebuff.

There is another sort of day which needs celebrating in song—the day of days when spring at last holds up her face to be kissed, deliberate and unabashed. On that day no wind blows either in the hills or in the mind; no chill finds the bone. It is a day which can come only in a northern climate, where there has been a long background of frigidity, a long deficiency of sun.—*One Man's Meat.*

By-Products

THERE IS ALWAYS the miracle of the by-products. Plane a board, the shavings accumulate around your toes ready to be chucked into the stove to kindle your fires (to warm your toes so that you can plane a board). Draw some milk from a creature to relieve her fullness, the milk goes to the little pig to relieve his emptiness. Drain some oil from a crankcase, and you smear it on the roots to control the mites. The worm fattens on the apple, the young goose fattens on the wormy fruit, the man fattens on the young goose, the worm awaits the man. Clean up the barnyard, the pulverized dung from the sheep goes to improve the lawn (before a rain in autumn); mow the lawn next spring, the clippings go to the compost pile, with a few thrown to the baby chickens on the way; spread the compost on the garden and in the fall the original dung, after many vicissitudes, returns to the sheep in the form of an old squash. From the fireplace, at the end of a November afternoon, the ashes are carried to the feet of the lilac bush, guaranteeing the excellence of a June morning.—*One Man's Meat.*

The Sound of the Sea

THE SOUND OF THE SEA is the most time-effacing sound there is. The centuries reroll in a cloud and the earth becomes young again when you listen with eyes shut to the sea—a young green time when the water and the land were just getting acquainted and had known each other for only a few billion years and the mollusks were just beginning to dip and creep in the shallows, and now man, the invertebrate, under his ribbed umbrella anoints himself with oil and pulls on his Polaroid glasses to stop the glare and stretches out his long brown body at ease upon a towel on the warm sand and listens.

The sea answers all questions, and always in the same way, for when you read in the papers the interminable discussions and the bickering and the prognostications and the turmoil, the disagreements and the fateful decisions and agreements and the plans and the programs and the threats and the counter-threats, then you close your eyes and the sea dispatches one more big roller in the unbroken line since the beginning of the world and it combs and breaks and returns foaming and saying: "So soon?"—*One Man's Meat*.

American Attitudes

AMERICA HAD TO BE MADE before it could be lived in, and that making took centuries, took extraordinary energies and bred an attitude to life that is peculiarly American. It bred the temper of the pioneer, the temper of the gambler, the temper of the booster, the temper of the discounter of the future who is to some extent bound to be a disparager of the past. It took optimism to cross the Atlantic, optimism or despair and anger at the Old World from which the reluctant pioneer had come. Until this century, there was always tempting the adventurous or the unlucky the dream of a new chance a little farther on. Movement became a virtue, stability a rather contemptible attitude of mind. The frontier in English speech is a defined barrier between two organized states; in American it is a vague, broad, fluctuating region on one side of which is a stable, settled, comparatively old society, and on the other, empty land, a few savages, unknown opportunities, unknown risks. American history has been a matter of eliminating that debatable area between the empty land and the settled land, between the desert and the sown. This elimination has now been completed, but it is too early, yet, for the centuries-old habits to have changed and much too early for the attitude of mind bred by this incessant social process to have lost its power.—*The American Character.*

Man's Spirit

MAN'S SPIRIT is not concerned with objects; that is the business of our analytical faculties. Man's spirit is concerned with the significance that relates objects to one another. With their totality, which only the piercing eye of the spirit can perceive. The spirit, meanwhile, alternates between total vision and absolute blindness. Here is a man, for example, who loves his farm—but there are moments when he sees in it only a collection of unrelated objects. Here is a man who loves his wife—but there are moments when he sees in love nothing but burdens, hindrances, constraints. Here is a man who loves music, but there are moments when it cannot reach him. What we call a nation is certainly not the sum of the religions, customs, cities, farms, and the rest that man's intelligence is able at any moment to add up. It is a Being. But there are moments when I find myself blind to beings—even to the being called France.—*Flight to Arras.*

The Call We Answer

WHEN THE WILD DUCKS or the wild geese migrate in their season, a strange tide rises in the territories over which they sweep. As if magnetized by the great triangular flight, the barnyard fowl leap a foot or two into the air and try to fly. The call of the wild strikes them with the force of a harpoon and a vestige of savagery quickens their blood. All the ducks on the farm are transformed for an instant into migrant birds, and into those hard little heads, till now filled with the humble images of pools and worms and barnyards, there swims a sense of continental expanse, of the breadth of seas and the salt taste of the ocean wind. The duck totters to right and left in its wire enclosure, gripped by a sudden passion to perform the impossible and a sudden love whose object is a mystery.

Even so man is overwhelmed by a mysterious presentiment of truth, so that he discovers the vanity of his bookkeeping and the emptiness of his domestic felicities. But he can never put a name to this sovereign truth. Men explain these brusque vocations by the need to escape or the lure of danger, as if we knew where the need to escape and the lure of danger themselves came from. They talk about the call of duty, but what is it makes the call of duty so pressing?—*Wind, Sand and Stars*.

What is Distance?

I KNOW THAT NOTHING which truly concerns man is calculable, weighable, measurable. True distance is not the concern of the eye; it is granted only to the spirit. Its value is the value of language, for it is language which binds things together.

And now it seems to me that I begin to see what a civilization is. A civilization is a heritage of beliefs, customs, and knowledge slowly accumulated in the course of centuries, elements difficult at times to justify by logic, but justifying themselves as paths when they lead somewhere, since they open up for man his inner distance.

There is a cheap literature that speaks to us of the need of escape. It is true that when we travel we are in search of distance. But distance is not to be found. It melts away. And escape has never led anywhere. The moment a man finds that he must play the races, go to the Arctic, or make war in order to feel himself alive, that man has begun to spin the strands that bind him to other men and to the world. But what wretched strands! A civilization that is really strong fills man to the brim, though he never stir. What are we worth when motionless, is the question.

There is a density of being in a Dominican at prayer. He is never so much alive as when prostrate and motionless before his God. In Pasteur, holding his breath over the microscope, there is a density of

being. Pasteur is never more alive than in that moment of scrutiny. At that moment he is moving forward. He is hurrying. He is advancing in seven-league boots, exploring distance despite his immobility. Cezanne, mute and motionless before his sketch, is an inestimable presence. He is never more alive than when silent, when feeling and pondering. At that moment his canvas becomes for him something wider than the seas.

Distance granted man by the childhood home, by the chamber at Orconte, by the field of vision of Pasteur's microscope; distance opened up by a poem. What are these but the fragile and magical gifts that only a civilization is able to distribute? For distance is the property of the spirit, not of the eye; and there is no distance without language.—*Flight to Arras.*

Man and Men

MAN IS NOT THE SAME AS MEN. We say nothing essential about the cathedral when we speak of its stones. We say nothing essential about Man when we seek to define him by the qualities of men. Humanism strove in a direction blocked in advance when it sought to seize the notion of Man in terms of logic and ethics, and by these terms communicate that notion to the human consciousness. Unity of being is not communicable in words. If I knew men to whom the notion of the love of country or of home was strange, and I sought to teach them the meaning of these words, I could not summon a single argument that would waken the sense of country or home in them. I may, if I like, speak of a farm by referring to its fields, its streams, its pastures, its cattle. Each of these by itself, and all of them together, contribute to the existence of the farm. Yet in that farm there must be something which escapes material analysis, since there are farmers who are ready to ruin themselves for their farms. And it is that "something else" which is the essence of the farm and enhances the particles of which the farm is composed. The cattle, by that something else, become the cattle of a farm, the meadows the meadows of a farm, the fields the fields of a farm.

Thus man becomes the man of a country, of a group, of a craft, of a civilization, of a religion. But

if we are to clothe ourselves in these higher beings we must begin by creating them within ourselves. The being of which we claim to form part is created within us not by words but only by acts. A being is not subject to the empire of language, but only to the empire of acts. Our Humanism neglected acts. Therefore it failed in its attempt.

The essential act possesses a name. Its name is sacrifice.—*Flight to Arras.*

The Rights of Man

SACRIFICE SIGNIFIES neither amputation nor repentance. It is in essence an act. It is the gift of oneself to the being of which one forms part. Only he can understand what a farm is, what a country is, who shall have sacrificed part of himself to his farm or country, fought to save it, struggled to make it beautiful. Only then will the love of farm or country fill his heart. A country—or a farm—is not the sum of its parts. It is the sum of its gifts.

So long as my civilization leant upon God it was able to preserve the notion of sacrifice whereby God is created in the hearts of men. Humanism neglected the essential role of sacrifice. It thought itself able to communicate the notion of Man by words and not by acts. In order to save the vision of Man present in all men, it could do no more than capitalize the word. And mankind was meanwhile moving down a dangerous slope—for we were in danger of mistaking the average of mankind or the arithmetical sum of mankind for Man. We were in danger of mistaking the sum of the stones for the cathedral. Wherefore little by little we lost our heritage.

Instead of affirming the rights of Man present in the individual we had begun to talk about the rights of the collectivity. We had bit by bit introduced a code for the collectivity which neglected the existence of Man. That code explains clearly why the in-

dividual should sacrifice himself for the community. It does not explain clearly and without ambiguity why the community should sacrifice itself for a single member. Why it is equitable that a thousand die to deliver a single man from unjust imprisonment. We still remember vaguely that this should be, but progressively we forget it more and more. And yet it is this principle alone which differentiates us from the ant-hill and which is the source of the grandeur of mankind. For want of an effective concept of humanity—which can rest only upon Man—we have been slipping gradually towards the ant-hill, whose definition is the mere sum of the individuals it contains.—*Flight to Arras.*

The Comforting Hours

TWO PARTS OF THE DAY I LOVE, morning and evening—old men's time for walking—because they cannot sleep, because they would sleep. And two walks out of the city I love, the one to see the sun rising, the other to see it set. . . .

These are the hours that comfort age; for youth, though sometimes excited by these lovely extremes, measures life by what lies between—day, when old men find time heavy on their hands, and night, when old men have no love and cannot sleep. Only children do not think of the sun-god. For them it is day at one moment and night at another and they are so busy in all that brings them sleep that they never see time move; like birds they cry out when the sun goes, and at once for them the day is dead. But as we grow older and become foolishly busy, all our days are either too long or too short, and our lives have no even flow. Until, suddenly, the sun, as if weary of being chased, stands still and we realize that where there is no night nor day, no swing of work and rest, life hardly exists at all. Is it any wonder that youth and age see different meanings in the same things? Or that old people love those hours that give sense to too-long life? All life hangs on heavenly order that all may sense in the rhythm of a turning world, that the child obeys, and men forget, that old age discovers just as it begins to feel the stopping of the wheel.—*Bird Alone.*

The Measure of Friendship

SHE CAME IN, and her wide smile and her blush did not make it easy to tell her why I came: it was a greeting for myself alone. And when we sat before the fire I felt immediately a live thread begin to spin itself between us, just as it did one night in Youghal, like a cobweb spinning across the road of a spring day. This was something I had not foreseen, and what with, in her, a shyness that she could not conceal and, in me, that sense of the night outside, suddenly becoming vast and multitudinous, pitying to no one, according as the warmth of the room and her companionship came stealing over me; what, too, with the memory of the summer that had been so solitary and calm, I felt about us and our talk an atmosphere quite new to me.

It was akin to benevolence and far more deep and mysterious than friendship, because it was friendship in its first stage when one is giving all, spreading out all one's little riches, not yet having discovered either how much it is vain to offer or expect. That I knew now, who have for years tried to live alone, is how people do meet and join: a first slight bridge, a wavering feeler out of the shell of self; then a gush of willingness, giving with both hands; then, when all is given, the secret measuring by each of what—not of what the other has given but of what each has taken. Then end and measure of utter friendship, the

only release from the cave of loneliness, is with him who knows how to accept most. That discovery has meant everything to me. For as it is with men, so it is with life which we understand and love in proportion as we accept without question what it gives, without question as to whether we need it, not even questioning whether its gift seems cruel or kind. It is the supreme generosity because we do not even know who the Giver is; why He has given; or what.—*Bird Alone.*

Things That Will Never Change

SOME THINGS WILL NEVER CHANGE. Some things will always be the same. Lean down your ear upon the earth, and listen.

The voice of forest water in the night, a woman's laughter in the dark, the clean, hard rattle of raked gravel, the cricketing stitch of midday in hot meadows, the delicate web of children's voices in bright air—these things will never change.

The glitter of sunlight on roughened water, the glory of the stars, the innocence of morning, the smell of the sea in harbors, the feathery blur and smoky buddings of young boughs, and something there that comes and goes and never can be captured, the thorn of spring, the sharp and tongueless cry—these things will always be the same.

All things belonging to the earth will never change—the leaf, the blade, the flower, the wind that cries and sleeps and wakes again, the trees whose stiff arms clash and tremble in the dark, and the dust of lovers long since buried in the earth—all things proceeding from the earth to seasons, all things that lapse and change and come again upon the earth—these things will always be the same, for they come up from the earth that never changes, they go back into the earth that lasts forever. Only the earth endures, but it endures forever.

The tarantula, the adder, and the asp will also

never change. Pain and death will always be the same. But under the pavements trembling like a pulse, under the buildings trembling like a cry, under the waste of time, under the hoof of the beast above the broken bones of cities, there will be something growing like a flower, something bursting from the earth again, forever deathless, faithful, coming into life again like April.—*You Can't Go Home Again.*

THOMAS WOLFE

A Quality of the Spirit

THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE who have the quality of richness and joy in them and they communicate it to everything they touch. It is first of all a physical quality; then it is a quality of the spirit. * * * It is probably the richest resource of the spirit; it is better than all formal learning, and it cannot be learned, although it grows in power and richness with living. It is full of wisdom and repose, since the memory and contrast of pain and labor are in it. * * *

People who have this energy of joy and delight draw other people to them as bees are drawn to ripe plums. Most people have little power for living in themselves, they are pallid and uncertain in their thoughts and feelings, and they think they can derive the strength, the richness and the character they lack from one of these vital and decisive people.—*The Web and the Rock.*

The Burden of Blame

TO HATE WAS EASY. It was, in fact, exceptionally easy. It was, in fact, necessary at times. For man's own protection this was so. . . .

Yet through childhood and through school the humans are taught to expect attention and assistance. They grow to depend on them. The fault was not with them then. But on leaving school they are shocked at the discovery that these elements have vanished. Nor is there anybody handy around to blame, no teacher, no mother, nobody to take the responsibility, really, for creation being the way it is or sickness being the way it is. Mankind is awful, and death unfair, and young authors write their first books of bitterness—cries against a God who could make such things so. Or the young blame the older, or the older blame the younger, forgetting that each is as helpless as the next against life's antics. This attitude of shoving the blame off onto somebody else was excusable, Hardson felt, during the turning point of youth, but becomes downright repulsive when carried over into adulthood by persons who refuse to become weaned.—*A Stranger Came to Port.*

The Mystery of Life

WE HAD SAT BESIDE the little pool and watched the tree-frogs and the horsehair worms and the water-skaters, and had wondered how they got there, so far from other water. It seemed to us that life in every form is incipiently everywhere waiting for a chance to take root and start reproducing; eggs, spores, seeds, bacilli—everywhere. Let a raindrop fall and it is crowded with the waiting life. Everything is everywhere; and we, seeing the desert country, the hot waterless expanse, and knowing how far away the nearest water must be, say with a kind of disbelief, "How did they get clear here, these little animals?" And until we can attack with our poor blunt weapon of reason that causal process and reduce it, we do not quite believe in the horsehair worms and the tree-frogs. The great fact is that they are there. Seeing a school of fish lying quietly in still water, all the heads pointing in one direction, one says, "It is unusual that this is so"—but it isn't unusual at all. We begin at the wrong end. They simply lie that way, and it is remarkable only because with our blunt tool we cannot carve out a human reason. Everything is potentially everywhere—the body is potentially cancerous, phthisic, strong to resist or weak to receive. In one swing of the balance the waiting life pounces in and takes possession and grows strong while our own individual chemistry is distorted past the point

where it can maintain its balance. This we call dying, and by the process we do not give nor offer but are taken by a multiform life and used for its proliferation. These things are balanced. A man is potentially all things too, greedy and cruel, capable of great love or great hatred, of balanced or unbalanced so-called emotions. This is the way he is—one factor in a surge of striving. And he continues to ask “why” without first admitting to himself his cosmic identity.—*Sea of Cortez*.

Gathering Knowledge

IT IS NOT ENOUGH to say that we cannot know or judge because all the information is not in. The process of gathering knowledge does not lead to knowing. A child's world spreads only a little beyond his understanding while that of a great scientist thrusts outward immeasurably. An answer is invariably the parent of a great family of new questions. So we draw worlds and fit them like tracings against the world about us, and crumple them when they do not fit and draw new ones. The tree-frog in the high pool in the mountain cleft, had he been endowed with human reason, on finding a cigarette butt in the water might have said, "Here is an impossibility. There is no tobacco hereabouts nor any paper. Here is evidence of fire and there has been no fire. This thing cannot fly nor crawl nor blow in the wind. In fact, this thing cannot be and I will deny it, for if I admit that this thing is here the whole world of frogs is in danger, and from there it is only one step to anti-frogicentricism." And so the frog will for the rest of his life try to forget that something that is, is.—*Sea of Cortez*.

The Women Watch Their Men

THE PEOPLE came out of their houses and smelled the hot stinging air and covered their noses from it. And the children came out of the houses, but they did not run or shout as they would have done after a rain. Men stood by their fences and looked at the ruined corn, drying fast now, only a little green showing through the film of dust. The men were silent and they did not move often. And the women came out of the houses to stand beside their men—to feel whether this time the men would break. The women studied the men's faces secretly, for the corn could go, as long as something else remained. The children stood near by, drawing figures in the dust with bare toes, and the children sent exploring senses out to see whether men and women would break. The children peeked at the faces of the men and women, and then drew careful lines in the dust with their toes. Horses came to the watering troughs and nuzzled the water to clear the surface dust. After a while the faces of the watching men lost their bemused perplexity and became hard and angry and resistant. Then the women knew that they were safe and that there was no break. Then they asked, "What'll we do?" And the men replied, "I don't know." But it was all right. The women knew it was all right, and the watching children knew it was all right. Women and children knew deep in themselves that no misfortune was too

great to bear if their men were whole. The women went into the houses to their work, and the children began to play, but cautiously at first. As the day went forward the sun became less red. It flared down on the dust-blanketed land. The men sat in the doorways of their houses; their hands were busy with sticks and little rocks. The men sat still—thinking—figuring.—*The Grapes of Wrath.*

Man's Next Step

MAN'S ABILITY to form associations had reached a certain point and then stopped. And at this point, as though to remind him of the difficult further step from which he shrinks, death and destruction on an unprecedented scale have intervened. Why can he not take this further step? There are many reasons, and they are closely associated together. For one thing his imagination is weak and undeveloped. He will behave with extraordinary self-sacrifice toward those who march with him under the same flag because he has shared their life and their dangers and his fellowship with them has given a fragmentary but none the less real access of meaning to his own existence. He cannot often see himself as a fellow man with his enemies who are undergoing precisely the same dangers as himself; still less can he think of himself as a partner and collaborator with those of completely different races and customs who perhaps have not yet developed his present and dangerous state of organization. Yet he must take this further step in fellowship if he is to survive.—*The Return of the Traveler.*

The Urge to Kill

IT WAS INDEED a worthy trophy; theoretically a perfect trophy because it was the fruit of effort and endurance. Because it had behind it the full weight of the journey, of hardship, exhaustion, of that unbelievable march, of three days' hunting, during which all except the quarry merged out of consciousness, and of a final stalk that continued in somber heat from sunrise till near sunset. Because, too, the antelope was a superb bull, old, driven out of the herd, living a solitary life between forest and river; so that the time had come for death at the height of his powers, his death hurting no living creature except himself and his killer, and—at the end—coming to him painlessly from an almost impossible shot at two hundred yards that lodged a bullet in the only square foot of neck that was visible between the tree trunks. And, after that, his flesh had been cut up and eaten, his liver and kidneys served up as breakfast dishes, his skin dried in the sun, his head and headskin preserved for decoration. So that, even in death, he lived and gave life and was useful—which was more than you could say for miserable humans. . . .

This killing was a deep-rooted instinct. And, whether it were ruthless or careful, its fulfillment relieved an appetite that was no more bestial than any other of man's cravings for food, drink, lust or hysterical religion. Bloodletting was a personal matter.

It brought either satisfaction or disgust, and—until you tried—you could not tell whether or not you had yet transcended the instincts that required it. Didn't they say that, until you had tried God, you could not know whether or not you wanted Him?

There were men who *must* find brutal assuagement, against man or against animals; there were others who couldn't.—*No Arms, No Armour.*

A Man's Memories

THE RIGHTS OF OWNERSHIP are sacred to everyone. His house, his garden, his bed-sitting room, his favorite chair, his row of books, or the tools of his trade, must be unquestionably his own to lose or lend, barter or cherish, according to his sole inclination. The manifestation in the army of this human instinct is the petty theft which prevails, but which is known by a kindlier name. It is another instance of unnatural vice provoked by unnatural circumstance. For the soldier is ruthlessly stripped of personal possessions and burdened with government property. Nothing that he takes with him to war is his own by choice; nothing is his own in any sense except that he must pay for it in cash or punishment if it is lost or damaged. The pathetic little bundles which are sent to a widow are evidence of this state. There is a wallet, a photograph, a few letters and perhaps a watch, a cigarette case or a treasured pencil. These aids to a man's memories are all that a soldier may cherish. Any memory itself is his only asset of worth.

So the soldier finds himself bereft of human dignity, often submitted to the whim of any natural bully, sometimes commanded by his moral, physical and mental inferiors, seldom possessed of military ambition, denied the choice between right and wrong, deprived of love and hope, and left with only his recollections. They become infinitely precious,

for they alone are his intimates. They can never be stolen away. They enable the past to redress the present and to kindle hope for the future.

Memories are curiously independent of predictable value, and it is not the gold and jewelry that sparkle through the darker rainstorms. A common evening by the river quite often outshines a royal greeting, while a cup of tea in the wind-blown twilight may provide more lasting refreshment than the wedding breakfast. Perhaps all people specialize in their recollections, some hoarding up their social triumphs, their scoops on the Stock Exchange or Tote, their feats of sport or of physical prowess. But others, who have never been able to judge the importance of success, go in for worthless oddments which accumulate but dust and cobwebs and a musty odor of sentimental affection. These we take with us.—
The Voice of the Trumpet.

The Worst Part of War

THE WORST PART OF WAR is not death and destruction but just soldiering; the worst part of soldiering is not danger but nostalgia; and the worst part of a soldier's nostalgia is the lack of intimacy, the lack of privacy, and the deprivation of the rights of self-determination and ownership.

This loss of the intimate activities and passivities of human life is a pain suffered in vastly differing degrees by the various categories of men and soldiers. Many are, by their normal habits, independent of this refuge; and they, of course, do not suffer at all by their dispossession. On the other hand are those who regard the ultra-companionship of a wife, and the close interlocking of their lives with the life of a woman, as their source of moral courage and their only means of tranquillity. Such persons, when herded into an army, find themselves deprived of strength and bereft of virtue.

The lack of privacy is in its turn a hardship for some and a boon to others. The majority of men suffer keenly from the cruel indignities of its absence; they can neither meditate upon their sorrows or fortify themselves with the logic of existence, nor summon their souls to aid their recuperation from the buffets of society. But, strange as it may be, there are some who have a horror of solitude and a repugnance for their own company, and these most delight in the military corporation.—*The Voice of the Trumpet.*

The Golden Age

THAT STATE OF MIND which sees madness all about us and reason at the vanishing point of the background, may be summed up as the worship of the Golden Age. For as a student of history I am unable to find any warrant for the belief that any period has offered men the kind of peace and certainty that the modern ego is clamoring for. It is pure illusion to think that the scheme written down in Thomas Aquinas was ever a physical reality. Why write it down if even a near approach to "order" had been achieved? The anger and bitterness of Dante are a reminder, in case we have forgotten it, that the Middle Age was a period of fearful political maladministration. . . .

What is true of the alleged medieval serenity holds good for the classical epoch. . . . It takes only a copy of Thucydides and a modicum of imagination to recognize that the Greeks at all times of their history led the most chaotic, passionate and disorderly life conceivable. They preached and praised serenity, no doubt, together with a number of other institutions which it would be hard to acclimate on our soil, but calm composure and the austere sign of discipline were with them, as they are with us, individual achievements.—*Romanticism and the Modern Ego.*

The Living Dead

PEOPLE "DIED" all the time in their lives. Parts of them died when they made the wrong kinds of decisions—decisions against life. Sometimes they died bit by bit until finally they were just living corpses walking around. If you were perceptive you could see it in their eyes; the fire had gone out. Yes, there were a lot of people walking around who were "dead" and a lot of people killed who were "living". She couldn't explain it any more than that. But you always knew when you made a decision against life. When you denied life you were warned. The cock crowed, always, somewhere inside of you. The door clicked and you were safe inside—safe and dead.

And usually it was fear that made you pull the door shut: emotional fear of becoming involved with people, of loving too much (because it always meant suffering to love deeply, as she loved Gerald and Peter); physical fear of pain and death (if she, for instance, had stayed home from this trip); spiritual fear of the great and the unknown that made you stop in your mind when you came on words like God and Prayer.—*The Steep Ascent.*

The Inner Core

WHAT WAS THIS THING she called "texture" or "consistency"? Didn't it make up life, the very stuff of living? At least, wasn't it the top crust of living that most people broke through and never noticed at all, never enjoyed? It wasn't all of life of course; just one layer. To appreciate life, Eve was beginning to realize vaguely, you must take it at all its levels; at its top crust, at its middle everyday layer, and then at some deeper inner core she wasn't quite sure of and couldn't analyze and had only felt once or twice in her life, in great moments. Most people got only the middle layer; children always got the crust; but very few people reached the inner core. Saints, perhaps, and great artists. The rest of people were like her and only felt it once or twice in their lives, when they were in love or sharpened by pain or sorrow, or near death.—*The Steep Ascent.*

The House and the Family

WE EXISTED BEFORE YOU, you see," the family might have said to the house, and the house, in its tickings, its rustlings, its creakings as its beams grow hot, grow cold—as the ashes fall in its grates, as its door-bells ring, as the trains in passing underneath it vibrate in its walls, as footsteps run up and down the stairs—as dusters are shaken, carpets beaten, beds turned down and dishes washed—as windows are opened or shut, blinds drawn up, pulled down—as the tap runs and is silent, as the lavatory is flushed—as the piano is played and books are taken down from the shelf, and brushes picked up and then laid down again on the dressing table, and the flowers are arranged in a vase—as the medicine bottle is shaken; as, with infinite delicate care, the spillikins are lifted in the children's game—as the mice run under the wainscot—the house might steadfastly reply, "I know! I know. All the same, in me you exist."—*Take Three Tenses; a Fugue in Time.*

Men in Battle

HOW MUCH OF A BATTLE can a soldier witness? If a man is swimming for his life, how much of the ocean does he see? Half a dozen perilous yards in front of him, a few menacing feet to the right and the left of him, perhaps; while as for what lies behind him, he knows nothing and has no time to guess. He is straining every muscle and nerve in order to keep alive. If anger, or fear, or the excitement of combat have not crowded out all other emotions, he may occasionally feel a certain astonishment at not being dead. Mr. Mann has always believed that the peculiar dull silence of old, scarred warriors is not the silence of sick horror but the silence of vague emptiness—the half-shamefaced silence of men who cannot think of anything to say. A soldier can only speak of what he alone has done, and this may be told in a few seconds, because there is not very much for one man to do. When the moment comes, the fierce moment of bloody contact, every man is alone in his own red mist with his own desperate enemy. The beautifully coordinated army breaks up for a little while into the atoms of which it is composed—into tiny, lonely, life-histories,—*Faces in a Dusty Picture*.

Thoughts of Flight

WHO HAS FLOWN and not felt the paradox of man's power: the perfect, self-righting balance of this delicate machine, the pitiful mark left by human hands on the vast panorama stretching below? Who has flown and not gloried in the illusions of power created by gunning the ship on the runway, clearing a section of steel fence for the first time by ten feet, slipping wingwise with ailerons and rudders opposed into the uprushing earth? Who has flown and not felt closer to nature for learning to look for the wind's least messengers? for understanding the reasons for diminishing thrust as one climbs into the atmosphere's rarity? for seeing the wonder of the sun go down as the tight blanket of darkness draws in from the compass' quarters, making the very air small and the hangars' cylindrical black mouths fade away as the roads become rivers of light?

Who has flown and not been struck by the annihilation of ugliness at even a few hundred feet? No remnant of planless poverty or obsolescence survives a short climb. Over a great city characteristic five-story roofs provide in uniform black the fine geometry of a gridiron. The wonder that light works on this formidable terrain depends on whether one is flying into or away from the sun. Flying into it, the impression is hard. Uniformity takes on an iron hue relieved only by such brilliancies as would resem-

ble gongs or artillery fire if they could be heard. Of such are the rivers, whose collision with the setting sun is head on; the small bodies of water and the myriad scintillations of pane-glass and windshield. But flying with the sun at one's back reverses the process, favoring everything with shadowed softness. Only a supreme act of intellect on such occasions can evoke the shapes of dumbbell tenements, mournful yards, irresponsible penthouses. "A glaze is put over life. The leaping hare is caught in a marble panel."—*The Poetry of Flight*.

Men in Bombers

FIGHTER PILOTS get emotion because their work is quick and it ends before the emotion has time to end, and the emotion is still with them when they climb out of their planes. A fighter pilot can get drunk at his work, emotionally drunk, but a heavy bomber pilot just works, an aerial taxi driver he calls himself ruefully, a freight engineer and he just works and the men who fly with him just work. Long-range heavy bombardment takes hours, three and four hours going and three and four hours returning, and that is too long for emotion to last. There is brief emotion when the enemy closes in and there is the feeling of combat, vicarious for everyone except the men at the guns at the moment, and the bombardier gets it briefly when he squeezes and the bombs cascade out, but those moments are lost in the long monotony of the mission, the hours of steady, noisy airplane pounding in the air, the deadly drugging effect of the engines on nerves, the long times, one hour, two hours, three hours, four hours, on oxygen, the careful, precise, non-amusing, can't be done improperly stream of things that the pilot, the engineer, the radio man, the navigator have to do, the sitting and waiting, ears aching, head rocking, mind-alert hours, sometimes tilting mentally forward for something that may never come, pitching mentally over when it does not come. Men who fly bombers and who fly

in bombers come out of their airplanes exhausted and bored in a way no one was ever bored before. Men who fly in bombers are not really older than the men who fly in other kinds of airplanes; they just look that way.—*Tomorrow Will Sing.*

Women in Wartime

WAR IS AWFUL FOR MEN, but it is not too good for women.

The women who stood on the sidewalk in front of the Palazzo had lived in daily dread that their men might be hurt, or worse. Women who had argued with their men and been impatient with them when they had them securely forgot the arguments and thought only of the nice things, the being waked up in the middle of the night by a man crawling clumsily into bed, the loud laugh with the head thrown back, the smell of a certain smoke, the sound of a certain kind of wine clucking out of the bottle.

And so the women stood there on the sidewalk in front of the Palazzo with their hands at their throats or reaching vaguely for loose wisps of hair.

The men walking up the street saw the women standing there. They did not break into a run. Their happiness was terrifying; they walked slowly toward their women.

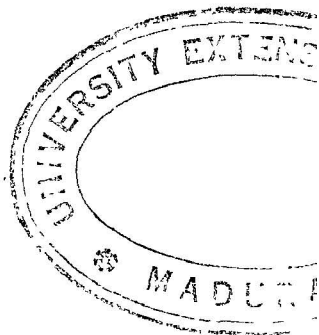
When the men had reached a place about five hundred yards from the women, the crowd of women started moving forward slowly at first, the feet just shuffling on the sidewalk, then stepping forward as necks craned and eyes darted, then walking to be closer and finally running and shouting wordless sounds.

The men did not break into a run. The women ran

toward the men. There was equal happiness on both sides, but it just happened that most of the men knew their women would be there, whereas some of the women were not sure that their men would be there. That was the difference. That is why the women ran.—*A Bell for Adano.*

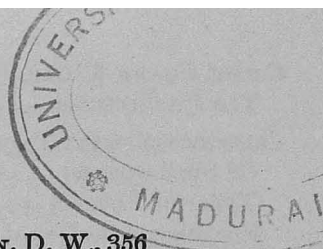
Patience in War

WAR, WITHOUT VIRTUE IN ITSELF, breeds virtue. It breeds patience in the impatient and heroism in the cowardly. But mostly it breeds patience. For war is a dull business, the dulllest business on earth. War is a period of waiting. Each day of it crammed with the little hesitations of men uncertain of themselves and awed by the ghastly responsibilities—responsibilities of life and death, the responsibilities of gods—that have been thrust into their hands. The soldier waits for food, for clothing, for a letter, for a battle to begin. And often the food is never served, the clothing is never issued, the letter never arrives, and the battle never begins. The soldier learns to wait meekly, hoping that something will happen. And when the period of waiting is at an end the something that does happen isn't what he expected. So in the end he learns to wait and expect nothing.—*A Walk in the Sun.*



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